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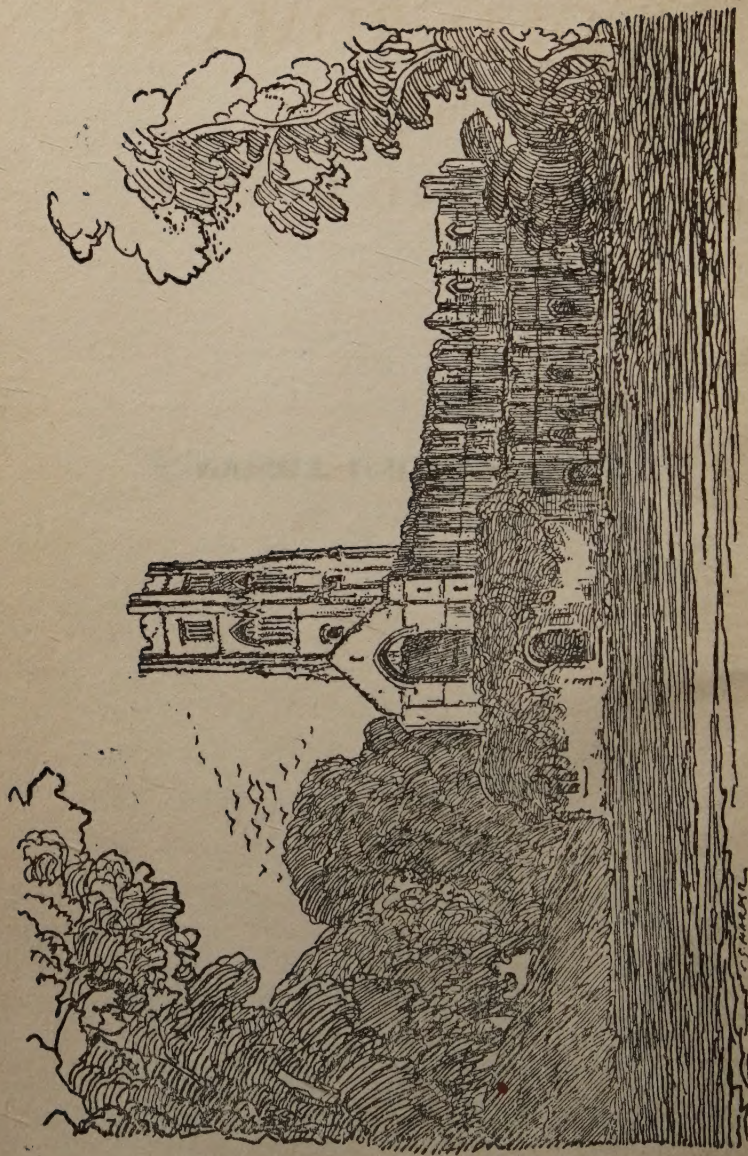
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METROPOLITAN
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ABBEYS OF OLD ROMANCE



FOUNTAINS ABBEY

942:726
ABBEYS
OF OLD ROMANCE

By
CHARLES G. HARPER

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR



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ABBEYS OF OLD ROMANCE

I

RISE AND EARLY DECAY OF THE MONASTERIES

RELIGIOUS fervour, in an age of implicit belief, was the cause of the establishment, throughout the civilised world, at an early period, of a number of monastic Orders whose ideals were those of seclusion from the world, with vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in the observance of their religious rites. This age, from the sixth to the twelfth centuries, produced in England alone, more than two thousand six hundred monasteries, of which that of Glastonbury, originally a community in the native Celtic Christian Church in Britain (not yet known as 'England') was the first. Glastonbury later became a Benedictine monastery, in the Roman Catholic Church, and the Anglican Catholics, a remnant from that early Christian conversion of Britain in which St. Alban, the first Christian martyr in this country, suffered death in A.D. 303, in the Diocletian persecution, were submerged in the Roman re-conversion of England in the mission of St. Augustine in A.D. 596. Augustine, a Benedictine, of the Order founded by St. Benedict in A.D. 528, although coming into England against his will, sent by the Pope, Gregory the Great, was active, and gradually the Roman Church replaced the native in the west and in the north, where at Whitby and in Northumbria it had flourished.

The establishment of numerous other religious

Orders followed, with the like ideals, many of them originating from the laxity into which by degrees the Benedictines had fallen. They professed different rules, mostly of a more severe and ascetic nature. The Canons Regular were formed in 763; the Clunias, at Cluny in Burgundy in 910; the Austin Canons, 1067; the Carthusians, 1084; the Cistercians, 1098, the Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar, semi-religious and semi-fighting forces, 1104 and 1118; the Premonstratensians, 1120; the Trappists, 1140; and finally, that purely English Order, the Gilbertines, 1148.

All these monastic communities, founded in fervour and poverty, their ideal, inevitably fell away from their original high aims; largely through the accumulation of wealth acquired by the benefactions of those who originally admired them, or gave lands in expiation of their evil lives and in hope thus to purchase salvation in the next world for themselves or for their ancestors.

It would not be difficult to show that, on these lines, monasticism was a complete and a selfish error and the monkish life a negation of Divine precepts. But, at the same time, the world in those centuries was one in which the monastery had its uses. It kept civilisation together when otherwise it might have been completely overthrown in the violence of lawless men. It kept alive learning and medicine, and, in the case of the Cistercians, who primarily were farmers and wool-growers, after their religious profession, it brought the waste places under cultivation. Hospitality in those times when inns practically were unknown, charity, and the repairing of roads, and the building and maintenance of bridges were among the chief activities of the brethren.

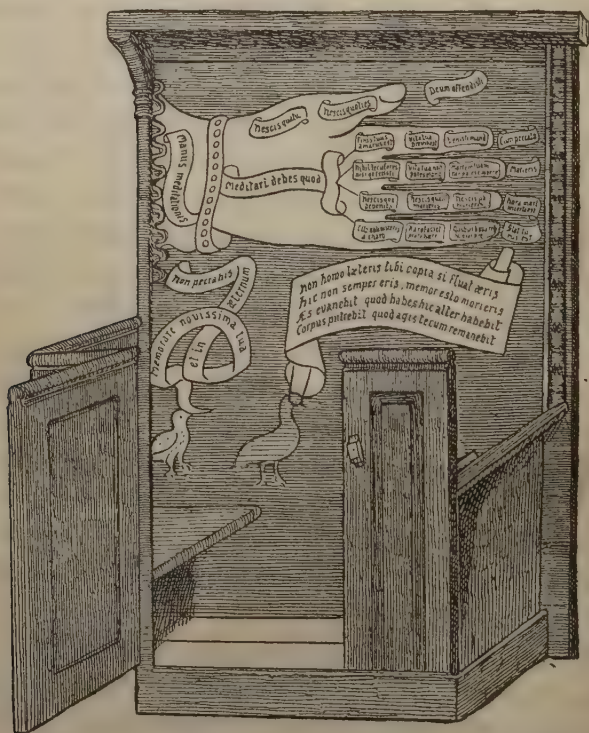
Often it happened, in the early days of the monasteries, that the great lords and others who founded them afterwards retired into the Abbeys and Priories of their own foundation, as humble brethren, not as superiors, and there, wearied of the world, ended their days. But we do not so often find those ladies who founded nunneries, whenever they sought seclusion in their own religious houses, doing so merely as ordinary sisters. No indeed, that would not have squared with the love that women generally have for dominating others of their own sex. In fact, when a great lady founded a female convent, she often made herself the first Abbess or Prioress.

No new abbeys or priories arose after the twelfth century. By that time the lofty ideals of early monasticism had been dimmed. Nothing is more remarkable in the story of the religion than the swift rise of the monasteries from their early days of poverty into affluence as great landowners, and the consequent baronial state in which the great Abbots lived, in their own separate houses, apart from their monks, entertaining the greatest in the land, and many among them summoned to sit as peers of the realm in Parliament.

The abbeys and priories, at first in many instances humble, were enlarged and rebuilt in a grander style, and even the Cistercians, whose early principles forbade architectural elaboration and the vanities of great towers, later built at Fountains and elsewhere the lofty towers upon which earlier they had looked with disfavour.

Who were those that designed and built the great and lovely abbey churches whose ruins we now see? By tradition, the monks themselves did that. The monk laboured in the scriptoriums, reading and writing,

and often spending years upon the illumination of missals. He sat, with his brethren in the little cubicles in one of the cloister walks, and there, in the "carrels," as they were called, he expended hours daily in his studies. There is such a "carrel" preserved in the parish church of Bishop's Cannings in Wiltshire



A MONK'S CARREL, BISHOP'S CANNINGS CHURCH

to this day. How a monk's carrel should come into a parish church has not been explained.

This particular example of a carrel is of fifteenth-century date, and is plentifully decorated with inscriptions in Latin to the effect that life is short and eternity is long and the like moral reflections. A

number of the alcoves in the cloister at Gloucester Cathedral (which was originally an Abbey church) remain in which such carrels were placed. The alcoves themselves are indifferently called by the same name.

It always has been assumed that the monks designed and built their own monasteries and their abbey or priory churches. But did they so? Tradition says they did, and some modern painters, like the Victorian Stacey Marks, R.A., have pictures of monks sculpturing fantastic gargoyles. Yet how shall we explain in this way the consummate skill, and the exquisite artistry shown in the craftsmanship of these mediæval buildings? We have no records that there was ever a school of architecture in any monastery and it is beyond a possibility that amateur monkish architects could have brought into being those great and lovely churches. A point to be observed and considered is that, assuming for a moment that they did so design and build, there must in that case have been a very wide local divergence in architectural style: a divergence which we do not, as a matter of fact, find. The same architectural features appear simultaneously, with but little variation, in buildings erected in the same period, but in widely separated districts. This could not have happened if each monastery was its own architectural authority. There must therefore have been some professional or central architectural fount of inspiration. The problem thus set before us is not now likely to be solved; but we see in our own time this same legend of the monk as architect put about and gaining belief, in the case of Buckfast Abbey, in Devonshire, a modern monastery of French Benedictines whose buildings, by repeated assertion, have been the mark of those monks. This legend has,

however, recently (October 1929) been finally disposed of by the architect himself, in the daily press. He, one in ordinary practice, claimed the work as his own, and stated it was not the Abbot himself, nor his monks who set this story afoot of the brethren



MONKS' CARRELS IN THE CLOISTERS,
GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

designing and building their own Abbey. He added that in the course of years, some of the brethren had become rather skilful in the building of walls ; but that was the full measure of their accomplishment.

Of what class, then, was the monk ? And of what

section of society was the nun? Commonly it is thought the monk—the typical monk of the middle ages—was a poor man. He was not. The monasteries were peopled largely, apart from those who had a true vocation, by those disappointed in worldly ambitions, or in love, or those others who had tasted of the world's pleasures and had wearied of them : by many others who found a studious life difficult in the outside world, and for the rest, by those who wanted privacy and peace. To believe that because men and women entered the cloister they of necessity left human nature outside would be absurd ; and we know, from many records that pride and arrogance, back-biting, gluttony, and indeed every lust and sin pervading the outside world might be found, and often were found, in the secluded places.

The monk, after the first centuries of monasticism had passed and the simple ideals of St. Benedict were glossed over, was indeed a person in comfortable, and often luxurious, circumstances. He lived in better style than the gentry ; every monastery had its *conversi*, the lay-brothers who performed the menial tasks : often the lay-brethren out-numbered the monks by two to one.

II

ABOUNDING LUXURY OF THE MONASTERIES

We have many evidences of the abounding luxury of the monasteries at the opening of the thirteenth century. It was about 1210 that Giraldus Cambrensis, Archdeacon of Wales, having returned from Paris, where he had been pursuing his theological studies, dined at Canterbury with the monks there, and tells

us what kind of feast that was. Gerald did not like his fellow-Churchmen, and so he misses nothing in this condemnatory account of the bill of fare. There were sixteen lordly dishes and upwards, besides a course of herbs, which did not greatly attract ; fish of several kinds, fried and boiled ; omelettes, seasoned meats, together with sundry provocatives of the palate, prepared by cunning cooks ; wines in ample profusion ; and various liquors, most of whose names sound strangely to us : sicera, piment, claret, must, mead, and moretus (mulberry wine). There was anything and everything, he says, except honest ale, the boast of England, and more especially of Kent. " What would Paul the hermit have said to all this ? " asks Gerald ; " or St. Anthony, or St. Benedict ? " the founder of the Order in which this splendid banquet was held.

Gerald had, as contemporary and friend, Walter Map, or Mapes, like himself, a Welshman. Map, born at Wormesley near Hereford about 1140, was a Churchman, a judge, a courtier and a wit ; Canon and prebendary of Lincoln, an itinerant judge, parson of Westbury-on-Severn, and in 1176 prebendary of Mapesbury in St. Paul's Cathedral. A bitter enemy of the monks, he nursed an especial ill-will against the Cistercians, and classed them with the Jews in an exception he reserved in his oath as a judge to do equal justice to all men ; " since," he said, " they are just to none."

Enriched by gifts of manors, together with the offerings of the superstitious faithful, the monasteries, becoming such great landowners, early were recognised as a danger to the State. In 1279 was passed the Statute of Mortmain (*in Mortuâ manu*, the Dead Hand) under which no lands or houses could be

devised to the clergy, the members of ecclesiastical bodies being accounted dead in law, without licence from the King. But, like all laws, this was found to have loop-holes, apart from the dispensation frequently given by the sovereign, and the mischief steadily grew, as also did the laxity and luxury of the monasteries.

Chaucer's imaginary pilgrims to Canterbury generally are supposed to have set out in 1383, Chaucer's lady Prioress, Madame Eglantine, riding her palfrey, is of noble birth, and pretty and worldly. She wears a brooch with the motto, *Amor Vincit omnia*. In their company is a Benedictine monk fat, and with shaven crown and cheeks red and as smooth as glass ; his eyes like burning coals, by reason of lust and good living, the sleeves of his robe trimmed with the finest fur, with a golden love-knot pin holding his hood in place. Hare-hunting and feasting are more to him than the rule of St. Benedict. Beside him is a mendicant friar, no whit better, for he can sing tender songs to his harp, and treats the country folk in the taverns. In strong contrast with these disgraces to their religion we have the

“ Good man of relygioun
A pour persoun of a toun.
But riche he was of holy thoght and werk ;
He was also a learned man and clerk
That Christe's gospel trewely wolde preche.
Benign he was and wonder diligent
And in adversitee ful pacient.”

The poor parson, typical of many in that age, well knew adversity, for the monastic houses had by this time acquired most of the good livings and extracted

yearly from them the greater part of their revenue ; so that few scholars would or could accept such impoverished livings. Thus it was that most of the parish priests were at that time so ill-educated as to be almost illiterate. Many were scarce competent to recite a paternoster. Little wonder, then, that the clergy fell into contempt, or that the monks and friars had become a byword for greed, sloth and evil living.

William Langland, the author of the *Vision of Piers Plowman*, was at this time occupied in writing and amending and extending, and again re-writing his long poem dealing with the social, religious and political ills of the age. A modern stained-glass window to his memory in the church of Cleobury Mortimer, in Shropshire sets the seal upon the claim that he was a native of that neighbourhood. Himself in minor orders, and perhaps a chantry priest, he was poor all his life in the country and in London, and often near starvation. Perhaps it was that which made him the seer that certainly he was, for he accurately foretold the downfall of the monasteries. He is bitter, eloquent, and full of that *sæva indignatio* which cold and hunger, rags and weariness will produce, even in a prophet : if indeed they do not actually bring the prophet into existence. For seers and prophets, it may be observed, generally see disturbing things, Langland was no exception. Reading him, you find him to be as discontented and as little a respecter of persons as any fanatical orator in the London parks. He tells us he condescended to abase himself to none ; and we well may believe it. He is no humorist ; the jolly, amused way of Chaucer in telling his tales of the faults and foibles of his pilgrims does not enter into Langland's indignant work. He is unsparing, and hates the monks, the secular clergy, the hermits,

the palmers and the pardoners with an equal contempt and hatred.

“ Heremites an heap, With hookéd staves
Wenten to Walsingham, And their wenches after ;
Great lubbers and long, That loth were to walk
I found there friars Of all the four Orders,
Preaching the people For profit of the belly,
And glosing the gospel. As them good liked
For coveteise of copes, Construed it as they
would.”

Langland's picture of the life of England in those times, when the country was still suffering from the effects of the Black Death pestilence, which had swept away nearly half the population, is without relief from discontent. There are no lights to lighten the shadows. The moralist pictures the miseries and the vices of the poor, as well as the vices of the rich and of the clergy, and lashes them all, indifferently. He hates lawyers and the early reformers, too, and tells us he was never a “ loller ” ; by which he means he was not a Lollard. He knew the monks and nuns as they have revealed themselves to us, condemning themselves out of their own testimony, as yet to be found in the records of the age :

“ Sister Joan was a bastard.

Sister Clarice a knight's daughter ;

Sister Pernell a priest's wench, not fit to be a
Prioress ;

She bore a child in cherry-time : all the chapter
knew it.

They challenged her with it at election-day.

‘ Liar,’ cries one, ‘ Liar, liar ’, cries the other

Each hit the other under the cheek-bone
 Had they had knives, by Christ, each had killed the
 other."

" Many of these masters may dress as they will ;
 Money and their preaching soon meet one
 another.

God's love has turned trader, and the rich pay
 high,

And we in a few years have seen wonderful things
 If God's love and the Church do not cut down
 such friars,

The greatest mischief in the world will mount up
 full fast."

Langland confesses to disbelief in miracles :—

" Many a wax candle hangs as record of a miracle
 But all the world knows well, that miracle is none
 It profiteth your purses, and ye prelates suffer it
 That men should live and die and believe—in their
 ignorance.

And all the world is worse."

There is something in this of the opening stanzas
 of Tennyson's *Maud* and its passion and fret : " And
 all the world was worse." But it is the disappointed
 idealist who speaks here, not the morbid sorrow-
 stricken hero, soured by personal wrongs.

And again, " all the world was worse." Ay, indeed !
 But it had not suddenly grown worse. The miracle-
 makers and marvel-mongers had for very long been
 busy. We have an amazing example of such, in
 John Schorne, whose mechanical devil is the origin
 of that children's toy, " Jack-in-the-Box."

III

JOHN SCHORNE AND HIS MECHANICAL DEVIL

Towards the close of the thirteenth century there flourished as rector of North Marston, in Buckinghamshire, one John Schorne, who in common with most of the beneficed clergy at that time was accorded the title of "Sir," by which he is still sometimes known. Occasionally he is "master" John Schorne: "master" being a superior title, from "magister." He appears to have been a master of arts; and, as such, and as a rector, he was a cut above the ordinary parish clergymen. Little is known of his origin, but he is supposed to have been born at Shorne, near Gravesend. What we do know of him is perhaps not greatly to his credit; despite the ancient rhyme which declares:



JOHN
SCHORNE,
SUDBURY,
SUFFOLK

"John Schorne,
Gentleman borne.
Conjured Sathanas into a boot."

This fact of gentle birth did not prevent him from stooping to a mean and paltry trick upon the credulity of the rustics of that age. The feat of conjuring the Devil into a boot is said to have been accomplished at North Marston, where a shrine to Schorne's memory for many years existed, together with two carved effigies in the chancel of the church representing Schorne talking with the Evil One. These relics have disappeared, but the village still cherishes the memory

of its wonderful rector, who also provided a miraculous well, supposed to be capable of curing gout and ague. This so-called "Holy Well" was really a spring possessed of strong natural medicinal properties. "Sir John Schorne's Well" still remains, but the water now issues from a prosaic pump, and the once-famed medicinal virtues have well-nigh vanished. It should be added that although Schorne's shrine was in after years a place of popular pilgrimage, and although he is always represented with a nimbus he was never canonised. He was among the worst of charlatans, for his famous "Conjuration of the Devil" was accomplished by a little impish figure which he



JOHN SCHORNE,
WOLBOROUGH,
SOUTH DEVON

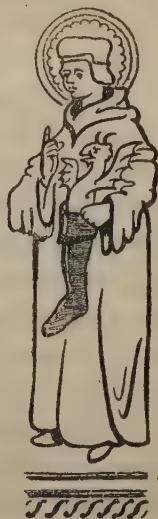


JOHN SCHORNE,
SUFFIELD, NORFOLK

made to rest on springs in the foot of a long boot he carried about with him. When he desired to impress and awe the ignorant, he would ask them to look into his boot, and then, actuating the springs with a slight unseen pressure of the hand, up would jump the figure, almost transfixing the superstitious rustics with horror. Having thus succeeded in convincing the beholders that the Devil was indeed there he would then proceed to demonstrate his power over the fiend

by releasing the spring, when the figure would sink back out of sight.

Schorne was at one time very fully represented in old church paintings, chiefly on rood screens, which often showed a black, horned, and very terrible imp issuing from the boot. The first example pictured here is at Sudbury, in Suffolk, and discloses a most ineffectual-looking and apologetic devil indeed, who seems rather alarmed for himself than alarming to others.



JOHN SCHORNE,
CAWSTON,
NORFOLK



JOHN SCHORNE,
GATELEY, NORFOLK

There are, in all, seven known representations of this thirteenth-century impostor, showing how considerable a hold he had obtained over the mediæval imagination. He is generally pictured in company with the minor prophets on the lower panels of rood-screens. It is interesting to compare the various renderings of him and his imp at Alphington, Portlemouth and Wolborough, South Devon; or at Cawston, Gateley and Suffield, in Norfolk, with the best example, that at Sudbury.

IV

LANGLAND'S PROPHECY—MONKS AND FRIARS

Then we come to Langland's wonderful vision of what was to befall. All he did thus prophesy actually did happen in another one hundred and fifty years, in the dissolution of the monasteries. The thing is so amazingly near to the reality that it seems scarce credible.

“ Badly have lords done to give their heirs' lands
 Away to the Orders, that have no pity :
 Money rains upon their altars ;
 There where such parsons be living at ease,
 They have no pity on the poor : that is their
 ‘ charity ’.

Ye hold you as lords ; your lands are too broad.
 But there shall come a king, and he shall shrive you
 all,
 And beat you as the Bible saith, for breaking of your
 Rule.
 He shall mend you monks, you canons, and you
 nuns
 And put you to your penance, and make you walk in
 old paths,
 And Barons and their sons shall blame and
 reprove you.

.
 For the Abbot of Abingdon and his niece, the
 Abbess,
 Shall be knocked on their crowns, and the wound
 shall be mortal.

He saw among many other scandals, the poor parson of Chaucer's lines, living on the bare subsistence the greedy monks had left him, after they had appropriated most of the tithes : after they had reduced most of the rectories to vicarages, making the clergyman the *vicarius*, or drudge, on a miserable stipend. When the Reformation and the Dissolution of the monasteries came, with the disposal of the monastic properties, the great tithes thus snatched by the monasteries, instead of going back to the parish church, went to those noblemen, gentlemen and adventurers to whom were given or who had purchased the manors. Thus we have the so styled "lay-impropriators," very many of them : including the Websters of Battle Abbey, and Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, who is on this score lay 'Abbot' of that place.

But long before these scandals of the worldly monasteries had grown to this extreme, the friars had come into being. It has already been said that the decline in monastic fervour was complete by 1200 ; a feature of monasticism by that time in every country. Then it was that St. Francis of Assisi in 1208 founded the Franciscans, those "friars of orders grey," who were the first of such Orders : as the Dominicans, or Black Friars, the Carmelites, or White Friars, and the Augustines were the later.

The friars won to an immediate and popular success. Their appeal was to the hearts of the people, for they were mendicants. They were vowed to poverty (as indeed were those recreant monks), but they, unlike the monks, had no homes, and they preached to the crowd. The selfish ideals of the members of the monastic orders, secluded from the world, was to pray for the salvation of their own souls : the friars were missionaries ; contrasted with the monks, they

were as the poor to the rich, as the democratic to the aristocratic. We may draw even a further comparison : they were what John Wesley and the Wesleyans in the eighteenth century were to the Church of England ; and what the Salvation Army was to all other religious



REMAINS OF GREYFRIARS, CANTERBURY

communities. To-day we see displayed before our eyes, something, in the quarrels over the succession in the governance of the Salvation Army and the disposition of its accumulated funds, very like the

uprising and the decline from early ideals of these mediæval bodies.

It was not long before the friars themselves acquired establishments and in their turn became wealthy. The Franciscans came to Canterbury in 1234 : the Dominicans to Oxford thirteen years later. By 1270 the Franciscans at Canterbury had acquired property, land being given them by one John Digg, a local merchant. It was an island between two branches of the river Stour, called " Bynneswith." Here to this day you may see the picturesque remains of their Friary, one of the oddest nooks in Canterbury, and one of the most difficult to be found, hidden away among commonplace houses in St. Peter Street and Stour Street. This remaining building appears to have been the gatehouse. It stands straddling the river, with actually its pointed arches supported on pillars in the stream. " Greyfriars House," as it came to be known after the dissolution, became the property, and was at one time the residence of the unfortunate Cavalier poet, Richard Lovelace, who wrote, among other well-remembered poems, the lines

" Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage ;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage."

He died miserably, in London, in 1658, in a house in Shoe Lane.

The friars depended at first upon the alms of the people, and the people were cheerful givers. The friars soon began to cultivate learning and with much success filled the professors' chairs in the Universities : in 1279, one of the Franciscans, John Peckham, was

elected Archbishop of Canterbury, and their houses grew in magnificence as the benefactions of those who admired them poured into their treasuries. It became an ambition of the great ones of the land that their bones should rest in their churches, and sumptuous shrines arose there.

In this way the friars went the same road as the monks, who hated them as upstarts : while the friars returned the ill-will with ridicule and contempt. The itinerant members of the friars roamed up and down the country, preaching and begging : for the friars were sturdy and persistent beggars.

The friars denounced alike the monks and the unfortunate secular clergy and the parish priests. They set up their portable pulpits in the market-places and by the village crosses, or in the churchyards. They absolved, for a fee, the most impenitent, and they diverted into their own channels the offerings that had been made to the Cathedrals and the parish priests. The friars penetrated into domestic circles, and were like the daughter of the horse-leech, always crying " give, give." Franciscans, Dominicans, Carmelites and Austin Friars hated not only the monks and the clergy : each Order of friars hated the others. A Franciscan would declare that no sinner on his death-bed could be safe if attended by a Dominican ; and the others declared the same of the Franciscans.

These hatreds and greeds were not lost upon the common people, who in the end came to regard with cynical indifference the claims of all the religious. As for the cathedrals and the parish churches, we may to this day see with what feelings these scorpions were regarded, in the carvings in wood on bench-ends and the miserere seats, in which the friar generally appears as the fox preaching to a congregation of geese.

The heartfelt hatred of a Benedictine monk is shown in a manuscript at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, in which is a drawing showing four devils with great love and affection caressing a friar. The manuscript belonged to Adam Elton, who was a learned Benedictine of Norwich, but lived for a great part of his life in Rome. A sculpture in Christchurch Priory



BENCH-END, FOX PREACHING, EAST BRENT, SOMERSET

church, Hampshire, shows a fox with a friar's habit in a pulpit, with the little figure of a cock on a stool at the back. On one of the stalls in Nantwich church is the sculptured figure of a fox in friar's habit, holding in his right hand a goose, while a hare hangs from a

stick held in the other hand. A fine example of these satirical efforts is seen on one of the miserere seats in the Choir of Boston Church, Lincolnshire, representing a Bishop as a fox, holding in one hand a crozier, while he preaches to a congregation of hens, securely holding a cock in his left hand. A Fox Bishop preaching to geese was a subject in the stained glass of St. Martin's Leicester, which unfortunately was destroyed at some time in the eighteenth century. A Latin inscription ran : *Testis est mihi Deus quam cupiam vos omnes visceribus meus* : " God is my witness, how I wish you all in my bowels." On one of the bench-ends in East Brent church, Somerset, we see a fox-bishop, or abbot, preaching to geese.

The friars at length brought their Orders into public derision. The literature of the age couples the dissolute friar with the tavern-haunting hermit ; keeping the worst of company, often drunk and fighting. The monks not infrequently were a scandal to their religion ; but at least their evil courses were committed in the cloister and were not open to the public gaze, as were the doings of the friars.

V

SCANDALOUS MONKS AND NUNS—VISITATIONS OF THE BISHOPS

That the habit did not completely make the monk or the nun has already been established. The visitations of the Bishops and other ecclesiastical authorities to the nunneries disclose a state of affairs often existing compared with which the reports of Henry the Eighth's Commissioners (so often discredited) are mild indeed.

The Benedictine Abbey of Elstow, visited by the Bishop of Lincoln in 1530, was an abode of luxury and impropriety and the Bishop admonished the Lady Abbess. Quite early in its history this Abbey of Elstow is found to be darkly referred to by the then Bishop of Lincoln, in 1270. He wrote to the Bishop of Worcester, a brother of Agatha Gifford, one of the nuns (the Archbishop of York was another of her brothers), saying that for the sake of the family he would do his best to hush up the scandal.

Jealousies and quarrels among the women were, it seems, the usual thing in the nunneries. Often, through mismanagement, or worse, the unhappy nuns went short of food and in rags, as they complained to the visitor. Such was the tale at Swine, in Yorkshire in 1286; and affairs were no better there in 1336. At the Priory of Ankerwyke, the Prioress, Clemence Medeforde, or Medforde, in 1441 was accused by her nuns, one Dame Margery Kirkby at their head, of many gross misdemeanours, and admitted them. She had pawned a chalice, and another chalice and a thurible had been broken up to make a drinking cup. She had cut down timber and sold it, and had alienated the psalters and other books, wore jewels and rich clothing, and kept no accounts of the convent's moneys. Also she was tyrannical with her nuns, and often came late to service, and had it begun all over again. It is no wonder that Margery called her, to her face, a thief, but it is strange that she should, or could, complain of it. However, the next year she died, and Margery occupied her place. At Grace Dieu Priory in 1435 the Bishop of Lincoln received complaints from the sisters that the old and bad-tempered Prioress was oppressing them. When the Bishop's successor in 1440 came to Grace Dieu they said she had upbraided them for

telling of this, and that loving kindness and charity were replaced by hatred and quarrels.

Leicestershire's religious houses all fared ill after the suppression, and that of Grace Dieu Priory, a small Augustine nunnery, is represented by only a few arches and walls in a meadow beside a railway in the Charnwood Forest region. This house was founded in 1286 by Rohesia de Verdun, and was partly suppressed in 1586 and then allowed to continue, owing to the representations made by the Leicestershire gentry that the nuns were of "virtuous conversation and all desirous to continue their religion there and none willing otherwise." The Prioress, Alice Lither-



GRACE DIEU PRIORY

land, therefore received the King's licence to remain, and the convent was to be re-established "in perpetuity." But in another three years the house was ruthlessly dissolved, although its dependents numbered thirty-six and by the dissolution they lost their employment and the poor of that neighbourhood some kindly help from those sisters, who were not themselves wealthy ; for the income of Grace Dieu was less than £100 a year. When the nuns were thrust forth upon that reforming and utterly changing world, their Prioress was given, for all her compensation, sixty shillings. In what way this little company was absorbed

into the secular world we do not know. One John Beaumont of Thringstone, Recorder of Leicester, in the end acquired the Priory lands, although the Earl of Huntingdon had the first grant. Beaumont was a covetous man, typical of those times ; a lawyer who became Master of the Rolls and degraded that high office by himself perpetrating a forgery, and further by appropriating some of the King's moneys, and by compounding a felony committed by one of his own servants. His ill deeds being proved, he was obliged to resign his office and to assign the greater part of his lands and other properties to the King ; and the Earl of Huntingdon regained the Grace Dieu lands, after all.

It was in 1689 that the ruined Priory came into the possession of Sir Ambrose Phillips of Garendon. He demolished the Priory Church. The family of Phillips still own much land in this region ; and by a strange chance they have reverted to the old faith. In 1835, Mr. Ambrose Phillips purchasing land in Charnwood Forest, presented it to the Cistercian order, until then not represented in the modern world of England. Shortly, a monk of the Order came from France, the forerunner of five other brethren, who between them built a chapel, opened in 1837. Later, that Earl of Shrewsbury who was so great a friend of Augustus Welby Pugin gave a sum of £2000 towards a fund for building a Cistercian Abbey of St. Bernard in Charnwood ; and in 1843 the foundation-stone of a building designed by that architect was laid.

The body of Rohesia de Verdun, who founded Grace Dieu and became the first Prioress, is not forgotten. It was removed at the suppression to Belton Church, together with her effigy, which lies there on a tomb restored in 1912 by Sir Joseph Verdin,

first and last Baronet of a creation of 1896, who claimed to be of the same family as that to which she belonged.

At the rich Abbey of Romsey in 1284 the nuns were found to be going short of food, but nothing seems to have been done to remedy matters, and in 1287, the Bishop of Winchester, William of Wykeham, insisted upon the proper quality of bread and ale being supplied.

Again, at the Bishop's visitation of the Benedictine nunnery of St. Michael's, Stamford, we learn sorrowfully, from authentic sources that the Prioress was found to be old and incompetent and ill ; persisting in living and dining alone, in spite of the Bishop's prohibition. No discipline was maintained. At a further visitation, two years later, the Bishop found that one of the nuns had a child and that another was tyrannizing over the other sisters. In the year 1442 and 1444 two other nuns were found to have had children. The Augustine Priory of Campsea, in Suffolk, near Wickham Market, was a nunnery with an income of some £300, founded in the twelfth century by Theobald de Valoins. The few remains of its domestic buildings are incorporated in a farmhouse. There is no reason to suppose that Campsea was a poor house, although at times it had complained of wealthy visitors foisting themselves upon its hospitality ; but in its last years there were bitter complaints by the sisters against the Prioress, Ela Buttry. They declared the food was insufficient and unwholesome ; that the dinner (such as it was) was late. But, if the sisters did not have enough, neither did their Prioress, for she stinted even herself. She died years after the dissolution, in 1546, and is buried at St. Stephen's, Norwich, where there yet may be seen a brass to her memory.

The nuns of Markyate Priory, a small house be-

tween St. Albans and Dunstable, were ever a chancy community. In 1300, the Bishop of Lincoln, visiting them in order to reprimand them for irregularities and to insist upon their admitting no one into their house, had the statutes he had read and then handed over to them thrown at him when he left. A hundred and thirty years later, in 1431, the downward path of this nunnery had reached a lamentable depth. The Bishop's Commissioners reported that one of the nuns, Katharine Tythesbury, had been immoral and had forsworn her vows; and that the Prioress herself, Denise Loweliche, had for five years consorted with the steward of the Priory, and would be still but that he had died: all to the scandal of religion in that neighbourhood. The Prioress had denied the charge, and begged she might bring five of her nuns whose evidence should refute it. She could not find five, and so was permitted to bring four: but not even four would help her: so she resigned.

But the case of the Prioress of the Benedictine house at Catesby, in Northamptonshire is the most deplorable. There was not much, indeed, to choose between her, Margaret Wavere and her nuns. All wandered abroad when they would: one had had a child, and the Prioress herself was in a state of immorality with a priest, one William Taylour. One of the younger nuns had caught her in this manner, in a garden at Catesby. She was found dancing and playing the lute with an Austin friar at midnight in a private room at Northampton. Moreover, she swore at the nuns, and would tear off their veils and drag them about by their hair; calling them beggars and harlots. They were not beggars, certainly.

Very many of such cases might be rescued from the Visitation records. There was that of Katharine Wells,

Prioress at Littlemore, who had an illegitimate daughter, and stole the goods of the house to provide a dowry for her. This was in 1518 ; and recorded a long series of misdeeds ; including the putting of the nuns in the stocks when they remonstrated with her. Some of the nuns rescued their sisters and broke and burnt the stocks. Meanwhile the house had gone almost utterly to decay.

Few among the nunneries could compare for wealth with the monks' establishments, but some, such as those of Romsey and Shaftesbury were very wealthy ; as the old saying had it : " if the Abbot of Glastonbury could marry the Abbess of Shaftesbury, their son would be richer than the King of England." Many monasteries and nunneries were heavily in debt, not always because of insufficient endowments, but by reason of extravagance ; and, oddly enough they often were indebted to the Jews. But some of the poorer nunneries, such as the Augustine nunnery of Rothwell in Northamptonshire in 1392, were so poor that the nuns were obliged to beg alms in the streets ; and numerous others employed proctors to solicit help in the like manner. Other houses were at the opposite extreme. In them the nuns dressed in silks and furs and fared sumptuously ; as at Elstow, where they wore low-necked dresses and open-work slippers, to the great scandalising of the Bishop, who reproved them, without effect. These were ladies of, as we should say now " county family " ; as very often nuns in those times were. The Benedictine and Cistercian priories of Blackladies and Whiteladies, on the borders of Shropshire and Staffordshire, near Brewood and Boscobel, would scarce have been given those familiar names had not the sisters of those houses been of gentle birth.

We may read, in the ancient records left of these houses that the nunneries were frequently used as places of retirement for ladies of rank and wealth. Not merely did the nuns educate, for reward of course, the daughters of the well-to-do : they, often against their will, received ladies who, for one reason or another, chose to go into residence, as guests, not as nuns. Many widowed ladies of wealth and station did so ; one of the chief reasons obviously being that, in those times, when houses were not plentiful and when dower-houses were often lacking, a dowager, far rather than live with her daughter-in-law, would prefer the walls of a convent, where—if she were a widow or other connection of one of the founders or benefactors of the house, she could domineer over the sisters. And it is to be remembered that the nunneries were very comfortable places, better built and equipped as a rule than a gentleman's house. The nuns, generally, could not help themselves in these matters, and had to receive their paying guests when ordered to do so by the Bishops.

VI

THE FRAUD OF THE RELICS

Meanwhile, concurrently with the rise to wealth and power of the monasteries, they had accumulated an ever-increasing store of what were alleged to be holy relics, for the adoration of the devout and for the attraction of pilgrims bringing further offerings and riches. Competition became intense among the religious houses for the attraction of the pilgrim traffic. If one establishment claimed to possess let us say, the head of St. Jerome, another would have the “ real

genuine" head. A list of these preposterous "relics" would form lengthy reading; to the amusement of the cynical and to the sorrow of those who would fain believe in the honesty of human nature.

These collectors of old bones and the like did sometimes possess authentic articles (or at least what they believed to be such), and they did not hesitate to steal from one another, whenever possible. Most of the great Abbey churches and Priory churches had, overlooking the Choir or the shrines containing relics, "watching-lofts," in which one of the brethren sat, relieved by others, to keep observation over these treasures, so that none should be stolen. These lofts served also occasionally for the purpose of observing if the services were being properly conducted—as for example—the beautiful loft with oriel window on the south side of the choir in the Priory Church of St. Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, generally known as "Prior Bolton's Pew." It is of late date, having been built by Bolton, 1506-1532. It bears on one of its panels a rebus, one of those fanciful devices the old abbots and priors loved, the representation of a cross-bow shaft piercing a barrel: a "bolt in tun"—for "Bolton." There is another—a very plain example of a watching-loft, in Malmesbury Abbey Church; and an elaborate wooden loft in St. Albans Abbey, built especially for the purpose of watching the precious relics of the saints, Alban and Amphibalus, in their shrines in the chapel north of the choir. Here the "feretrarius" kept watch and ward, relieved by his brethren, so that no unguarded moment might place the relics in jeopardy. These were not needless precautions, for the abbots and monks of other establishments could no more resist stealing a saint's teeth or thigh-bones, or any other part of his anatomy than

the modern criminal can forbear from his own evil deeds.

The relics of St Alban early had adventures. They had disappeared with the destruction of the original



THE WATCHING-LOFT, MALMESBURY ABBEY

church on the site of Alban's martyrdom ; and they were recovered only about A.D. 793, when Offa, King of the Mercians, had a miraculous vision of

where they were to be found. Again the church was despoiled, in one of the incursions of the Danes, who removed the bones of the Saint oversea and deposited them in the Danish convent of Owensee, whence sometime later they were returned. Seventy years later, when the Danes once more were ravaging the country, the Abbot of St. Albans, the eleventh of his line, hid the relics in a safe place, and, doubly cunning, despatched to the monastery of Ely what purported to be these bones of the proto-martyr. He entreated the monks of Ely to take especial care of their precious charge, and then with resignation he let the Danes do their worst.

When peace again reigned, the Abbot of St. Albans claimed the bones from Ely, but, as he had foreseen, the monks, convinced that they had acquired something which would make the fortunes of their house at first refused to part with them. When, under pressure, they were obliged to do so, they did what the crafty Abbot of St. Albans already had done : they substituted other bones. The Saint in the meanwhile appeared to one of the St. Albans monks, in one of those convenient visions which are so constant a feature of mediæval Church story, and told him the true relics must be brought forth from their hiding-place and deposited again in their shrine, which accordingly was done.

And then began a scandalous competition between St. Albans and Ely ; each claiming to possess the "true bones of St. Alban." They continued to be exhibited in both places until it became obvious to even the most credulous, that the Saint could not have had two skeletons. It then became necessary for the monks of Ely to confess the mean trick of which they had been guilty, in withholding what they had thought

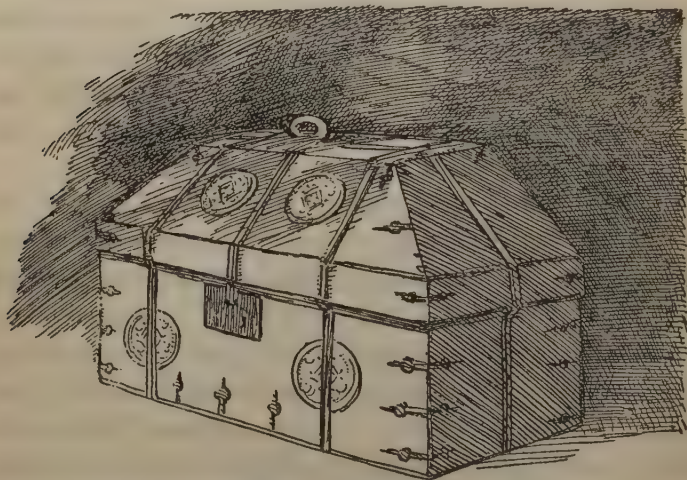
to be the genuine relics. But the dispute as to which were the "true bones" continued until the Pope sent a commission of three Bishops, to determine the truth of the matter.

And, after all, who was there to say that the Danes had been honest enough to return the actual relics they had taken oversea?

At Bodmin, the old county town of Cornwall, a place called otherwise, "Petrockstowe," was the Augustine Priory of St. Petroc. St. Petroc, peculiarly the Saint of Cornwall, and the West of England generally, was by birth of princely rank, but he preferred the religious life to ruling as a chieftain. He was born about A.D. 504. He studied in that then highly christianised country, Ireland, for some twenty years, in the monastery of Clonard Co. Meath, and then returned, as a missionary to Cornwall, landing at a place since named after him, Padstow (originally, like Bodmin, "Petrockstowe.") For thirty years he is said to have remained at Padstow; and then made pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem. Petroc's adventures are marvels of an early Celtic imagination. On his voyages he sailed in a stone bowl, which came to him of its own volition. He was absent from Cornwall seven years. In his pilgrimages a wolf kept watch over his staff and sheepskin cloak, and returned with him to Cornwall, where he settled on the wild inland moors at a hermitage and well. Here a fawn took refuge under his cloak when being pursued by a huntsman, who was revealed as Constantine, one of the petty kinglets of those parts, and was converted by Petroc. The saint, as he afterwards became, died in A.D. 564, and the site of his hermitage and holy well became a centre of religion in Cornwall. At least two religious houses were established here; an Abbey,

founded by Athelstan and destroyed by the Danes in A.D. 981 ; and a Priory of uncertain origin, was refounded in 1121, and the place became so completely identified with monasteries that from them it obtained its present name, which derives from " Bod-mynach," " the place of the monks."

The canons of this Augustine Priory had ever been of a singularly bad character. In 1177 one of them stole the greatest treasure, the bones of St. Petroc, and conveyed them across Channel to the Abbey of St. Mevennus, at St. Meén, in Brittany. On the



THE ST. PETROC RELIQUARY, BODMIN

intervention of Henry the Second, to whom the Prior of Bodmin appealed, these coveted bones were recovered, Roland de Dinan, justiciary of Brittany, appearing with an armed force before the Abbey to compel their surrender. Roger, the Prior, duly received them ; the Abbot of St. Mevennus swearing a solemn oath that he had not abstracted any part. Prior Roger of Bodmin brought back those relics,

which had been enclosed by the Abbey of St. Mevennus, in an ivory casket. On his way back to Bodmin he exhibited this ivory reliquary to Henry the Second, at Winchester. It was deposited with all reverence in the Priory Church, where it remained until the suppression. All trace of it was lost until 1830, when it was discovered, empty, beneath the flooring of the parvise-chamber over the south porch of Bodmin Church, which for centuries had been the repository of the Bodmin town records. Opinions differ as to the workmanship of this beautiful ivory casket : some considering it to be of Mohammedan craft—while others declare it to be Venetian. It is made of thin pieces of polished ivory, enriched with roundels in gold and colour, in designs of birds and geometrical patterns ; and measures one foot six inches, in length, by one foot in height.

A sum of £600 has been offered by the Science and Art Department for this work of art ; with the intention of adding it to the Museum at Kensington : but the offer was refused.

The last Prior of Bodmin, Thomas Vivian, was one of those heads of religious houses who in those final years before the dissolution, suffered much from the indiscipline in the cloister that had become a feature of the age. Writing to his friend, Master W. Lake, a mercer at the sign of the Padlock in Cheapside, he complained of being sorely disquieted by the set of unthrifty Canons in his Priory, who to the great slander of religion in the neighbourhood of Bodmin, came and went without his will or consent. One of these, Roger Arundell, the Prior, did actually withstand, not permitting him to depart.

At the dissolution, the site of the Priory was granted for a payment of £100, to Thomas Sternhold, co-

author with Hopkins in the celebrated translation of the Psalms.

Although the Abbot of St. Mevennus had sworn to not having held back any of the bones of St. Petroc his Abbey continued to show what was claimed to be his skull : and did so until the French Revolution made away with all superstitious relics ; as our own Reformation had done, two hundred years earlier.

Bodmin parish church belonged in part to the Priory, which owned the Choir. The nave was the property of the town. In the north aisle, removed from the choir, is the fully-vested recumbent effigy of that last Prior, Thomas Vivian, who was so troubled with his refractory Canons. The Priory House stands on the site of his Priory, with some scanty remains in its garden : and to the south-east of the church are remains of the Chapel and Crypt of the fourteenth century Chapel of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Canterbury possessed, as did many other places, pieces of the True Cross, of which, it was said at the time of the Reformation there was enough to build a galleon. Here was the bed of the Virgin Mary, with some wool she wove, and a garment of her making. Here too, was the rock on which stood the cross on which the Saviour had suffered, together with the sepulchre, the manger in which He lay ; the table used at the Last Supper ; the rock on which He had stood when ascending to Heaven ; Aaron's rod ; and—more marvellous and impudent than aught else—a portion of the clay from which God moulded Adam !

What are we to think of men who collected and exhibited as genuine such “relics” as these, but that they were shameless humbugs who could not possibly believe in the sacred mysteries they presumed to assert ?

The murder of Becket in Canterbury Cathedral on that dark December day of 1170, transferred the chief goal of pilgrims to Canterbury. All England, nay, all the world, flocked to his shrine. St. Alban, the first Christian martyr in England, was neglected for this new saint. It was eight hundred years since Alban had suffered, and he was perhaps becoming a dim, traditional figure. The Church saw only that Becket was fully honoured, and exerted every means of publicity to that end. Alban had suffered for Christ; Becket for the Church: which we must allow to be a very different thing. Pilgrimages to Canterbury brought great offerings: other shrines and other religious houses became woefully affected, and the heads of them were alarmed. So it was that Walsingham Priory, in Norfolk, provided what was hoped would prove a counter-attraction. It was pretended that when Palestine was conquered by the infidels, the spirit of the Virgin Mary had transferred itself from Nazareth and the birthplace of Our Saviour and had come into Norfolk and occupied a shrine in what until then had been a small and obscure monastery. The immediate result of this story was that the Augustine Priory of Our Lady of Walsingham became a place of pilgrimage, in receipt of vast and costly offerings, from not only English folk, but from also large numbers of pilgrims from the Continent. Henry the Third, Edward the First, Edward the Third, the Scottish King Bruce, Henry the Seventh and Henry the Eighth, all visited the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and made splendid gifts there. The then pious Henry the Eighth indeed walked barefoot from East Barsham, to render his offering.

This monastery became one of the most scandalously conducted of all. At the visitation of the Bishop of

Norwich in 1514 it was revealed that the Prior was a man of a notoriously depraved character, who had robbed the treasury of money and precious stones, and who went about habited, not as a Prior, but as a layman and was grossly immoral. In addition he kept hounds and a jester, and oppressed the Canons, who were themselves not much better than he. If they were any better, it was indeed because they had not their superior's opportunities. Scarcely was any attempt made to maintain the semblance of religion. The Canons fought among themselves, got drunk, and came in that condition into the church and went to sleep there. They climbed the walls at night and frequented the company of undesirables. The buildings were uncared for and were falling into dilapidations. This was the place visited by Erasmus in 1514 and described by him as then "splendid and beautiful." The chapel containing the alleged shrine of the Virgin was, he says, "built of wood. Pilgrims are admitted through a narrow door at each side. There is little or no light in it but what proceeds from wax tapers, yielding a most pleasant and odoriferous smell; but if you look in, you will say it is the seat of the gods, so bright and shining as it is all over with jewels, gold and silver."

Little wonder, then, that honest Churchmen, like Simon of Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, should in 1370, when meeting great crowds of pilgrims to the shrine of Becket, address them and say that no plenary indulgences to them for making pilgrimages would serve to absolve them from their sins. Pilgrimage was already fast becoming discredited as a religious solvent of sin; although it was becoming increasingly popular as a holiday: a very worldly and scandalous one, as a rule. The alarmed pilgrims

turned upon this frank and outspoken Archbishop, and cursed him ; predicting that St. Thomas would be avenged and that he would die a terrible death. Actually he did so, eleven years later, when Wat Tyler's rebels dragged him out of the Tower of London and beheaded him on Tower Hill. But St. Thomas had nothing to do with that.

But these deluded, the masses were later undeceived, when the exposures of such deceits as that of the Rood of Boxley were made. Boxley Abbey, a Cistercian house near Maidstone, had a wonderful figure of Christ upon the Cross, which opened its eyes and mouth and moved its head when made to do so by a secret arrangement of wires. Apologists for this implication of the supernatural declare that it was never meant to deceive and did not in fact deceive ; but we well may doubt them ; and when this figure was during the crisis of the Dissolution of the monasteries exhibited in London at St. Paul's Cross and its secret mechanism shown, the revelation of the impious imposture genuinely shocked and infuriated the people. At the opening of the sixteenth century the monasteries it was computed, owned some three quarters of the land of England. They were the most important landowners and their revenues amounted to £150,000 ; or, expressed in terms of present values, three millions sterling.

VII

COMING OF THE REFORMATION

Cobbett, in his *History of the Protestant Reformation*—a book written by one who was born of a Protestant family and was himself staunch in that Faith—takes the side of the old Faith and denounces all who

took part in the great sixteenth century change in England. To him, who refers to "Presbyterians and Methodists and the other motley mongrels and their bawlers," the Roman Catholics apparently could do no wrong and the monastic system was the acme of human good. It is surprising in that blustering John Bull kind of person, William Cobbett. But he was fresh from reading Lingard's *History of England*, a history written in the Roman Catholic interest, of which Cobbett's work, you almost may say, was a paraphrase. Cobbett's book has been issued, edited, with approval, by Cardinal Gasquet. That is of course : what else could be expected ?

But our Cobbett ever was unreliable, although always eminently readable. He was not reliable even on his own subject, agriculture and farming, of which he writes, as an expert, in his *Rural Rides*. He failed lamentably on his own farm near Ash, in Surrey : and he referred to the "villainous and worthless" soil of Hounslow Heath, on which he declared nothing would or could grow. We all know that for more than a hundred years the region of Hounslow Heath has been brought under cultivation and is the most fertile land near London : supporting the richest market gardens. That is the kind of authority that Cobbett is found to be ! So what shall we say of him when we read him thus : "All historians," he says "however Protestant or malignant, agree that they (the monasteries) were 'easy landlords' ; that they let their lands at low rents, and on leases of long terms of years."

The length of tenure does not enter into this discussion, but that the monasteries were the hardest of landlords few could have the hardihood to deny.

You will, no doubt, putting aside even the most

unquestioned evidence, believe, in these matters just what your prejudices will allow you to credit ; and will put aside the evidences that do not square with those prejudices with which you were born : prejudices that no learning will suffice to erase: of such are historians made.

The rights and wrongs of the Dissolution of the Monasteries form a tremendous subject on which none ever have agreed, or ever will. The conclusions really to be arrived at by any detailed study of this period by anyone determined to make an effort to be impartial are that the land was at this time infested with as sorry a set of scoundrels as ever walked the earth. All seemed to have been ready to sell their friends and relations, and their souls, for the sake of plunder and preferment. This it was to live in the age of the Renaissance. The Reformation, which began before the suppression of the monasteries was inevitable. It followed a definite and continuous chain of events for whose impulse we must look, not only to one feature, the decay in ideals in the monastic life itself, but to that great impulse in the history of the world civilisation ; the Renaissance, which affected every expression of human thought and activity. That new birth, which re-cast, and we even may say, removed all conventions, took its rise in Italy, towards the close of the fourteenth century. It was the recovery of the ancient Greek and Roman learning and culture. The classic graces in art and in literature and architecture, almost forgotten since the fall of the Greek and Roman Empires, were revived : learning, in the direction of medicine and science, sought inspiration in the older world, and its philosophy was revived. It was a pagan philosophy, and boded ill for the ideals of the Roman Church.

It was, for one thing, a break away from most accepted traditions. It ended what we know as the Middle Ages and mediævalism, and it at length put an end to the feudal system, which in England was further hastened to its close by the Wars of the Roses, in whose long-drawn struggles the flower of the English nobility perished.

From that time the ranks of the English nobility have been recruited very largely from those of enriched traders and merchants. As the Tudor period, succeeding the Plantagenet in England, ended the Middle Ages and feudalism, so the Renaissance, concurrently here ended the domination of Rome. There were, of course, very many contributory causes to the dissolution of the monasteries and to the Reformation ; and history shows us, in no uncertain way, that Henry the Eighth, Cardinal Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell, and all the other great actors in this drama were but the puppets placed upon the scene by the logic of events. The age produced them : if not they, others would have done as much, however different might have been the details of its doing.

A spirit of saturnine irony pervades the sequence of events in those times which involved the disappearance of the monasteries and the reformation of the Church in England. Cardinal Wolsey, hoping to be elected Pope, and twice disappointed, when the Popes Julius the Second and Leo the Tenth died, in 1513 and 1521, gave as we have seen, a lead to this end, when, to found his two colleges at Ipswich and at Oxford, he procured a Papal Bull authorising him to suppress a number of small religious houses and to apply their revenues to the purposes of his foundations. Henry the Eighth, destined for the Archbishopric of Canterbury, before the death of his elder brother,

Prince Arthur, opened for him the succession to the throne, was a man of learning and culture, vain of his abilities, and eager to be a disputant in any controversy. It was at this juncture that Pope Julius the Second, ambitious to build in Rome a metropolitan Cathedral which for size and beauty should outvie anything in Christendom, launched the project for that vast Cathedral of St. Peter which we see to-day at Rome. By "beauty," was understood something in the revived classic styles, for the Renaissance was now at its full fruition. To meet the enormous expenses of this project, he and his successor, Leo the Tenth, resorted to the device of selling "indulgences." Indulgences were, of course, no new thing. They had been fairly common: permits sold by the clergy to the faithful, indulging them from the stricter austerities in the observance of their religion. But abuses always had accompanied these sales, and they were in this instance particularly flagrant. The trouble was, again, an economic one. Too much money was going out of the several countries in which these indulgences were being sold, to Rome. The break first made itself felt in Germany, where Luther framed his famous ninety-five theses against the practice of these dispensations. Thus to the vast project for St. Peter's we owe one of the immediate causes of the Reformation.

Henry at once entered the war of argument against Luther, and proved himself, in the book he wrote, so doughty a supporter of the Pope, that Clement the Seventh conferred upon the King the title, *Fidei Defensor*, in grateful acknowledgment.

Thus, for awhile, the King became the "Defender of the Faith." Each and all of our sovereigns since then have used that title, still proudly inscribed upon the coinage: but it is as defender of the Protestant

faith. Is not this the most singular of all ironic circumstances ?

But actually the seed of the decline and fall of English monasticism was sown centuries earlier, when the alien religious houses were looked upon with disfavour, and finally were ended. The alien monasteries began so early as the reign of Edward the Confessor, and were enormously augmented when William the Conqueror conferred many English manors upon French abbeys, which very soon built upon them subsidiary priories, rendering annually the greater part of their revenues to their parent abbeys across the Channel. There were then in England thirty-five Cluniac priories, all subject and rendering tribute to Cluny in France, the prime abbey of an Order founded in A.D. 910. There were more than sixty-five other alien priories which (with the Cluniac establishments) yearly contributed sums equal to some £50,000 of our money to localities abroad. This was an economic matter not lost upon the sovereigns of those times ; and when Edward the First was in need of funds for his wars, he annexed them for a time, as also did his successor. After several vicissitudes of this nature, all those alien priories which had not become independent English houses, were in 1414 suppressed by Henry the Fifth.

Thus it was found that not all religious establishments could prove safe against secular interference. And not only the alien houses were the victims of Royal exactions : the monasteries in general suffered from time to time. Tintern Abbey was one of those which had to contribute on two occasions towards the ransom and subsequent expenses of Richard Cœur de Lion, who had been imprisoned by the Duke of Austria in 1192, and whose release cost 100,000 marks.

Tintern, that abbey of Cistercian wool-growers, lost the proceeds in that way of two seasons' shearing.

Someone has declared that "an Italianate Englishman was the very devil." By that was meant, apparently, that the Englishman permeated with the spirit of the Renaissance was as greatly affected by the vices of that era of complete licence as were the Italians themselves. Bearing in mind the excesses of the Medici, he could not have been worse. The reign of Henry the Eighth displayed to the full the magnificence, the extravagance, the luxury, ferocity and faithlessness of that fully developed new age. There was nothing to choose in these ways between the King and his Court, or the Abbots and their monasteries. The first move in the dissolution of the monasteries was made towards the close of February, 1535, when Parliament passed the Bill for the suppression of the lesser religious houses. "In this time," we read, "was geven unto the King, by the consent of the great and fatte abbottes, all religious houses that were of the value of three hundred marks and under, in hope that their great monasterys should have continued still. But even at that tyme, one sayde in the parliament house, that these were as thornes, but the greāt abbottes were putrified olde okes, and they must needs folowe ; and so will others do in Christendome good Doctor Stokesley, bishop of London, or many yeres be passed."

The first Act of Parliament, above referred to, was that of 27 Henry VIII cap. 28 ; entitled "An Acte whereby Relygeous Houses of Monkes, Chanons and Nounes, whiche may dyspend Manors, Landes, Tenementes, and Heredytementes, above the clere yerly value of ij.c.li., are geven to the Kinges Highnes, his heires and successours, for ever."

The preamble runs:—Forasmuche as manifest synne, vicious carnall and abhomynable lyvyng, is dayly used and commytted amonges the lytell and smale abbeys, pryoryes, and other rlygous houses of monkes, chanons and nounes, where the congregacion of such relygous persones is under the number of xij., persons, wherby the gouvernours of suche relygous houses and thir covent spoyle, dystroye, consume, and utterly wast aswell ther churches, monasteryes, pryoryes, principall houses, fermer, granges, landes, tenementes and heredytamentes, as the ornamentes of ther churches and ther goodes, and cattelle, to the high dyspleasour of Almyghty God, slaunder of good relygon, and to the greate infamy of the Kynges highnes and the realme, if redres shuld not be hadde therof; and albeit that many contynuall vysytacions hathe bene heretofore had by the space of two hundreth yeres and more, for an honest and charytable reformation of suche unthrifty, carnall and abhomynable lyvyng, yett neverthesse lyttel or more amendement ys hytherto hadde, but ther vycyous lyvyng shamelesly encreaseth and augmentith, and by a cursed custome soo rooted and enfested that a great multytude of the relygous persones in suche smale houses doo rather chose to rove abrode in apostasy than to conforme them to the observacion of good relygon: soe that without suche small houses be utterly suppressed, and the relygous persons therein commytted to greate and honorable monasteries of relygon in this realme, where ther maye be compelled to lyve relygously for the reformation of ther lyves, ther canne elles be no reformation in thir behalf. In consideracion wherof the kynges most royall majestye, beynge supreme hede in erthe under God of the church of Englande, dayly findyng and devysynge the increase, advauncement

and exaltation of true doctryre and vertue in the saide church, to the onely glorie and honor of God and the total extirpyng and dystruccion of vyce and synne, havynge knowledge that the premysses be true, as well by the comptes of his late vysytacious as by sondry credyble informacions, consyderynge also that dyverce and greate solempne monasteryes of this realme, wherin, thankes be to God, relygon is right well kept and observed, be destytute of suche full numbers of relygous persons as they ought and maye kepe, hath thought good that a pleyne declaracion shuld be made of the premysses aswell to the lordes spirituall and temporall as to other his lovyng subjectes the commons in this present parliament assembled : wherupon the said lordes and commons by a greate deliberacion fynally be resolved, that that yt yo and shalbe moche more to the pleasour of Almyghty God and for the honor of this his realme, that the possessions of suche spirituall relygous howses, nowe beyng spent, spoyled and wasted for increase and mayntenance of synne, shuld be used and converted to better uses, and the unthryfty relygous persons soe spendynge the same to be compellyd to reforme their lyves. And therupon most humbly desire the kynges highnes that yt may be enacted by anchoryte of this present parlyament, that his majestie shall howe and enjoye to hym and his heires for ever all and syngular suche monasteryes, pryoryes, and other relygous houses of monkes, chanons, and nounes, of what kyndes or dyversyties of habyttes, rules, or orders soo ever ther be called or named, which havee not in landes and tenementes, rentes and tythes, porcions and other heredytamentes, above the clere yerely value of two hundreth poundes."

The Act then goes on to provide for the settlement

of all debts, consideration of leases, rents, etc., with provision made for pensioning the dispossessed Abbots, Priors, Abbesses, monks and nuns.

Matters had progressed far when Erasmus and Dean Colet in 1512 journeyed to Canterbury and were taken to the gorgeous shrine of St. Thomas. The age was ripe for sweeping away these deceptions and mummeries ; and both these pilgrims, while marvelling at the magnificence of the decorations of the place and at the jewels and the gold enclosing the martyr's remains (the gold alone yielded at the dissolution only half an ounce short of 5,000 ounces, equal to over £20,000 of our present values), deplored them and refused to accept some rags, alleged to be personal relics of the Saint, which the courteous Prior offered as a gift.

There were many signs of the coming change, and it was a dignitary of the Church itself who unconsciously gave it a great urge forward, when in 1525 he obtained powers from the Pope, helping him to suppress a number of small religious houses and to appropriate their properties, for the purpose of securing endowments for his projected colleges at Oxford and Ipswich. If, then, it was permissible for any reason to suppress a monastery, there obviously would come a time when this precedent would be used for the dissolution of others. Nor was that time long in coming. In all the complicated interplay of motives which accompanied the dissolution of the monasteries in England and the Reformation, the question of Henry the Eighth's divorce from Katharine of Aragon occupies a prominent place. The King's passionate love for Anne Boleyn and his attempts to secure that divorce placed Wolsey in a difficult position in which he acted a double part, as indeed also did the Pope, Clement

the Seventh. International politics, and the succession to the Throne in England complicated the issue. Henry had no son, and the Pope had contemplated a dispensation granting him two wives at once, as the Pope's own predecessor, Eugenius the Fourth, actually had done, in the case of Henry the Fourth of Castile, in 1437. The King at length secured his divorce ; and Wolsey met with disgrace for his half-hearted support at the hands of his Royal friend and master, and died, an old and broken man before worse could befall him from one who hesitated little at sending any opponent to the block.

Thus, at the close of 1530, died the proud and powerful Cardinal. Could it, indeed, have been purely any question of conscience or morality, unaffected by politics, that led him to oppose or to help in delaying that divorce ? It was not, surely, any affair of morals ; for what were then the morals of the clergy ; from those of the parish priests to the Cardinals ; or even to the Popes themselves, whose illegitimate children did not in mediæval times seem greatly to scandalise Christendom. They were bound to be celibates, but that did not, it would seem, mean that they must be chaste, any of them. Wolsey himself had a daughter, a nun in the Abbey of Shaftesbury at the time of its dissolution. She was at that time twenty-four years of age. A letter written to Thomas Cromwell at that juncture exists, asking him what is to be done about " this secret matter."

At the fall of Wolsey, his chief agent, Thomas Cromwell, lost no time in ingratiating himself with the King.

Thomas Cromwell, who thus succeeded to the King's favour, was born at Putney in 1485 ; son of one Walter Cromwell or Smyth ; a man who was a fuller, a blacksmith and an innkeeper. The family

came from Norwell in Nottinghamshire, not far from the village of Cromwell, from which circumstance they no doubt derived the idea of changing their name. Incidentally, it may be added, Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector, born over a hundred years later (1599) was a kinsman ; through Thomas Cromwell's eldest sister having married one Morgan Williams. Richard Williams, son of Morgan Williams and therefore nephew of Thomas Cromwell, was befriended by his uncle and in gratitude to him changed his name to Cromwell. He was great-grandfather of Oliver.

Thomas Cromwell's career was that of an adventurer who experienced many startling changes. He had left home to become a soldier of fortune in Italy, was later a merchant, at Antwerp and at Middelburg, and then, returning to England, became a scrivener and studied in law. Wolsey, seeing in him a man of wit and resource and diligent in business beyond the usual run, greatly befriended him. If we say that Cromwell, astute and astonishingly efficient, was guided solely by expediency and by a care for his own advancement, we do no more than credit him with the qualities (or the failings) of all around him. He did not so much desert the fallen Cardinal as adroitly step into the place of adviser to the King left vacant. He surely took the measure of the King's temperament when he advised Henry to deny the supremacy of the Pope and declare himself supreme head of the Church in England. Parliament in 1534 declared the King to be head of the Church : in the three preceding years all tributes to Rome had been forbidden, and all appeals to the Pope declared illegal.

Thus in 1534 was the Reformation in England established by law. The King was the supreme head of the Church and Cromwell became his Vicar-General.

Cromwell was less fortunate in his ending than had been his old master, Wolsey ; but his fall was due to much the same cause, Henry the Eighth's matrimonial adventures. The King, on Cromwell's advice, had entered into negotiations for marriage with Anne of Cleves, whom he never yet had seen ; and when he saw the lady he coarsely likened her to a " Flanders mare." Her appearance was distasteful to him, and a further acquaintance did not improve matters. She was not cultivated and had no love for music. Whatever else we may think of Henry, he was truly a son of the Renaissance, with most of its culture and its vices. He was learned, and passionately fond of music. The King's revengeful mind readily turned in the direction of punishing his adviser for this disappointment, and he experienced little difficulty in doing so, for it was found that one, Dr. Barnes, who had dared to controvert the King's theological views, was one of Cromwell's agents in the negotiation of that marriage. To base upon this a charge of high treason against the Vicar-General was for those times an easy matter, and Cromwell, who but recently had been in high favour and had been created Earl of Essex, was instantly cast down. A Bill of Attainder, a kind of measure which his own lawyer mind had devised, and by which he had brought many to the block, instead of their being afforded a trial, was prepared against him, and he was thrown into the Tower. " His own sharp medicine," in the words of the Duke of Norfolk, was thus applied to him. From his prison he in vain appealed to the King for mercy. It was at first undecided whether he should be beheaded as a traitor, or burned as a heretic. In the end, he was executed as a traitor, July 28th, 1540. It was only on April 17th of the same year he had

been created Earl of Essex. He declared he died a Roman Catholic, repudiating the charge of heresy.

So perished one who was chief among the moving spirits of the Reformation : a man without principles ; time-serving and without mercy : overtaken by a strange and terrible fate. He was, at the same time, merely a figure brought into prominence by the logic of events and moved, after all, not so much by his own will as by the inevitable currents of the time.

The Reformation was not originally anti-Catholic so much as anti-papacy. It was, at the bottom, economic and political : a national resentment at the domination of, in effect, an Italian prince, pretending to supernatural authority, seated at Rome and extorting tribute. The Reformation set up, in the person of the King, a new Head of the Church who was more autocratic and no less a Catholic than the representative of St. Peter.

VIII

WHO WERE THE ARCHITECTS ?

Who were they to whom we owe the great and glorious Churches of the Middle Ages : the designers who imagined them, and the craftsmen who executed the work ? There is no clear-cut and definite answer. But it must be evident that great architectural works cannot be carried out without instructed skill. They cannot be brought into being and made to stand upright merely from the light of nature vouchsafed to any individual. The suggestion at once arises that some school, or schools, of architecture—or, if you like, merely of technical building—must have existed, to account for them. They have been, at times,

ascribed to the Freemasons. Many and various are the things ascribed to that society of "Free and Accepted Masons," whose history and ritual, by dint of much legend and contradiction and re-statement, is confused and utterly unreliable. If you like to believe these fantastic stories, it was Laban who first created the Freemasons, at the building of the City of Enoch ; or, alternatively, it was Nebuchadnezzar, at the building of the Tower of Babel. We may admire the ingenuity of all this, while placing no belief in it.

Freemasonry, in the view of one to-day who is not a Mason, is an institution merely in the nature of a benefit society, having nothing whatever to do with architecture or building. It long has ceased to have any such connection : perhaps five hundred years since. But that Freemasons really were originally what the name would imply there is no doubt. They were men who practised a craft, and were members of a guild, just as were the craftsmen of many other trades : only circumstances elevated their trade into a greater importance than others, and made their "mystery" (which was a common term for the society of any trade-guild) more mysterious. The building craftsmen for centuries were wanderers in the land, going from one job to another, and unlike most other tradesfolk who were settled definitely in their homes and workshops in towns and villages. (We see such an one in modern times, pictured by Thomas Hardy, in his *Jude the Obscure* : Jude the mason, moving about from place to place, where his work took him.) To these wanderers it became necessary that they should be recognised, when seeking work, as genuine skilled craftsmen, by the foreman on the job where he sought employment ; and thus by degrees came into being the hand-grip, the password and all the secret codes by which a member of

the fraternity could prove himself to be free and accepted of the guild, and no mere vagrant without a trade who, given a chisel and mallet, would spoil valuable stones. We have only to study the history of the mediæval trade guilds in general to note how strict their laws grew, and how exclusive they became. The Freemasons, by force of these circumstances, grew to be the most exclusive of all. That they were deeply concerned in the building of great churches is evident from some few surviving records. They had a lodge at St. Albans in 1200, and one at York (mentioned in the Fabric Rolls of the Cathedral) in 1300. But it does not in any way emerge that the Freemasons designed buildings. All that appears is that they were skilled carvers and setters of stones ; and that they were—very much as modern Trades Unions now are—extremely jealous of their exclusiveness, refusing to work with “cowans” : men not admitted to their society : in fact, “non-Union men.” There is nothing new under the sun.

The Freemasons, therefore, do not help us to discover who were the authors of the great architectural works of bygone ages.

It is not, after all is said, so very remarkable that we do not know who were they who designed these ancient glories of architecture ; when we consider that it has ever been a matter for dispute who designed the buildings of the “Royal Palace of Westminster,” which we call “The Houses of Parliament,” so recently as the first half of the nineteenth century. In spite of the conclusions generally arrived at that E. M. Barry, who was the official and recognised architect, was indeed the designer, the buildings themselves show in no uncertain way the hand and mind of Augustus Welby Pugin, who in fact was

employed by Barry on the work, as was visible to everyone during its progress. The conclusion to be arrived at therefore, is that Barry planned, and Pugin was the author of the Gothic designs of the elevations and details.

Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester 1077-1108, is credited with being the architect of his own Cathedral, of the existing tower of Dartford church, and of the great Keep of the Tower of London; but we do not hear of the Archbishops of Canterbury of that age being assigned this art of architecture. Instead, we are told of one "Conrad" who in 1130 completed the rebuilding of the Cathedral. His "glorious Choir" was destroyed by fire four years later. That he was an architect and a practical man, and not a monk, is certain, because it is recorded how difficult it was for him to persuade the non-technical monks that the burned fragments could not be saved and that all must be built anew. He had to exercise all his tact in the matter. His work was completed by one William of Sens and by "William the Englishman," when William of Sens met with a fatal accident. This work, the Choir of Canterbury Cathedral, is so obviously French that the inscription of its completion to "William the Englishman" would seem to mean at most, merely that he supervised the completion. Some identify him with William de Hoo, Bishop of Rochester.

Lincoln Minster, rebuilt in the time of St. Hugh of Lincoln, 1186-1200, was the work of one Geoffrey de Noiers, who, in spite of that name, seems to have been an Englishman. The lovely "Angel Choir" is a work of some eighty years later, 1260-1280, and is not ascribed to any known person. This work, surely the loveliest expression of Gothic art, executed when the Early English style was merging into Decor-

ated, takes its name from the sculptured figures of angels in the spandrels of the triforium. These figures show distinct traces of being the work of two different craftsmen, both great artists. The north transept of Westminster Abbey, existing at the same time, displays angels of much the same character. Professor Lethaby, in his work on Westminster Abbey, suggests that the Lincoln angels were sculptured in London at the same time as those of Westminster and were sent down to Lincoln to be erected ; but he seems to have overlooked the fact that the angels of this Angel Choir are of Lincoln oolite. A more likely thing is that the same school of artistic sculptors (wherever or whatever that school may have been) was responsible for both. It was no mean school : it exhibits nobility of design and superlative efficiency in execution. To suggest that monks did this work would be an absurdity.

As we come down the centuries, we are met with many puzzles and contradictions in this question of the authorship of architectural works. The famous octagon lantern of Ely Cathedral, built after the fall of the central tower in 1332, always has been ascribed to the genius of Alan of Walsingham, at that time sacrist and sub-prior of Ely. It is a bold and daring work, an innovation upon all earlier designs. Opinions to-day have come round to the suggestion that Alan of Walsingham was only conventionally credited with being the author of this remarkable work. The basis for the assumption that he was the designer of this feature is a passage to be read in the *Historia Eliensis*, in which it is said merely that he caused the workmen to make especially secure foundations and that he supervised the work. It does not state specifically that he designed it ; but that does not necessarily mean that he

did not. The chronicler perhaps omitted to set down in writing a fact which he and those of his time knew so well that it was an obvious thing, indisputable, inevitable and therefore not worth recording. So we of later ages are left to doubts and surmises.

At the time when this famous octagon of Ely Cathedral was in progress in East Anglia, there was arising in the West of England, all unsuspected, a new and final Gothic style : that style we call " Perpendicular," from the generally stiff, upright lines of its chief features. It was destined to be the last expression of the Gothic spirit, before and after the advent of Renaissance. After, we say, because although we have evidences of the Renaissance in Architecture so early as 1520, the Perpendicular style of Gothic survived and overlapped into the first half of the seventeenth century, when buildings were being erected in Oxford, that " home of lost causes " ; Gothic by that time being elsewhere one of those lost ideals.

It has been said that the Perpendicular style was born at Bristol. Who were the parents of it, none actually may declare ; but whoever they may have been who practised the first beginnings of it, they did not know what indeed they had done. It was left to others to develop these first and purely local adornments of one particular building into a style which rapidly overspread this country. The Perpendicular style is peculiar to England. Nothing like it is known on the Continent, where the style of this later period is what is styled " Flamboyant," and, incidentally is a far more artistic expression.

Bristol Cathedral, then the Abbey Church of an establishment of Augustine Canons, discloses to the curious observer some remarkable internal work, chiefly in the vestibule to the Berkeley Chapel and in

the north and south aisles. This, in the vestibule, is in the nature of detached, skeleton-like vaulting, while in the aisles it partakes largely of transoms which act as struts or strainers between the piers and the external walls. From these transoms rise curious vaultings which look like the ancestors, so to speak of the later "fan-vaulting". The work is thin and partakes of the character of woodwork panelling, rather than stone. It is credited to Abbot Knowle, who was Abbot from 1306 to 1332, but who began rebuilding some eight years before he attained to that office. Whether he actually was the architect in any sense there is not any evidence to show ; but we well may suppose he was a man with ideas and no practical knowledge, who sketched out his fancies, to which an executive worked. He was, as I think, what would in these days perhaps be styled a "gifted amateur." The design has an air of that sort.

From Bristol we may like to think, these beginnings of a style spread, by force of this example ; but it would be rash to assert actually as much as that. However that may be, a critical glance over the West of England will show us that, within the sphere of influence of Bristol some not dissimilar works were at about this time, a little earlier and a little later, executed. There is the strainer-arch in Portishead church, and, far more important, the four great inverted arches in Wells Cathedral, which serve to give an additional support to the central tower. We know that work to have been done in 1338. And not only do we see these evidences in the West. In Northamptonshire the two neighbouring churches of Rushden and Finedon have elaborate strainers across the chancel-piers : all of these things, belonging to a like period, have a very marked family likeness.

It is however, to Gloucester Cathedral we must look for the first full-fledged work in the Perpendicular style. The story of it is extremely interesting, and takes its rise in the abominable murder of Edward the Second in 1327, within Berkeley Castle. The story opens dramatically, like a Shakespearean tragedy, in the Abbot's lodging at what then was the Benedictine Abbey of St. Peter's, Gloucester (Henry the Eighth made it a Cathedral in his reformed Church). The story is told in the monkish *Chronicle of Gloucester Abbey*: " In the time of this Abbot (John Thokey) King Edward the Second came to Gloucester and was honourably entertained by the Abbot and Convent. As he sat at table in the Abbot's hall, and noted how the Kings his predecessors were painted there, he asked the Abbot in jest whether his own portrait should be added to theirs, or no. To whom the Abbot replied, rather in the spirit of prophecy than in that of jest, that he hoped he would have King Edward the Second in a more honourable place than this ; as indeed it came to pass. For after the King's death, his venerable body was refused by certain monasteries hard by, to wit, St. Augustine's at Bristol, St. Mary's at Kingswood, and St. Aldhelm's at Malmesbury, for fear of Roger de Mortimer and Queen Isabella and their accomplices. Yet Abbot Thokey fetched him from Berkeley Castle in his own chariot, sumptuously adorned and painted with the arms of our monastery, and brought him to Gloucester, where the Abbot and all the convent received him honourably in their solemn robes, with a procession of the whole city, and buried him in our church, in the north aisle, hard by the high altar."

In a short while Abbot Thokey was gathered to his fathers, but not before he had seen the great good

which the body of the Royal martyr (as folk began to think him) had brought to the Abbey. Pilgrims flocked to the shrine of Edward the Second, and brought offerings of such worth that John Wigmore, the next Abbot, was able to do much in the way of beautifying the Abbey church. He completed the south transept with the aid of the funds thus secured. Multitudes came from all parts ; and the late King's own son, Edward the Third " having been tossed well nigh to shipwreck at sea, and having been saved by his prayers to his dead father, offered a ship of gold ; and another which he had vowed in his devotion was redeemed at the prayer of our Abbot and convent, at the price of a hundred pounds." The horrors of the King's tempestuous voyage were said to have been caused by incantations raised by the necromancers of the French King.

IX

ORIGIN OF THE PERPENDICULAR STYLE

Great as were the offerings at King Edward's tomb, they did not suffice to realise the ambition of the Monastery wholly to rebuild the Abbey Church, and so the device was resorted to of clothing the stern internal Norman masonry of the eastern parts of it with a veneer (as well we may call it) of stonework. Here we have, in those portions of the fabric, a complete draping of the original work of some three hundred years earlier. It is a panelling by comparison with that virile Norman building, like a light trellis over a solid wall. It is vertical in general intention, with horizontal bars breaking it up into elongated panels ; extremely repetitive as a general scheme : sometimes perilously descending almost to tiresomeness, but

often rising to delicacy and ingenuity. Here then, if anywhere, was the Perpendicular style first consciously foreseen, as a motive which might be applicable to an entirely new building. The chronicler of the monastery tells us that John Wigmore, the Abbot in whose time (1329-1337) these works were begun, was an artist, as well as a lover of art. He "took much delight in divers arts, so that he himself very often wrought in them, and surpassed many different workmen in divers arts, not only in mechanical work, but also in weaving." This is reminiscent of what Whistler said of Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy, who was a versatile person, indulging in sculpture, music and a variety of activities. "And paints, too, I believe," said Whistler.

But, in whatever degree this dilettante Abbot Wigmore was responsible for this remarkable surface transformation of part of the interior at Gloucester, nothing is said of the workmen who performed the technical operations. They were not at any rate the monks; the monastery was in any case too comfortably off for that, and doubtless, as usual, ordinary craftsmen were employed. We do indeed, hear of monks working at building their own monasteries and abbey churches, but that was only when they were too poor, at the beginning to afford proper skill and labour, as at the very beginnings of Fountains Abbey, where the first community, founding a home in the wilds, cleared the ground, cut timber and erected the buildings, which must have been merely of timber. Professor Willis, writing in 1860 of these monks at Gloucester, says they "appear to be characteristic of a school of masons who were extremely skilful and glad of an opportunity of showing their skill"; but he proceeds with a comparison which will make a railway engineer smile.

He adds, "as a modern engineer likes to carry his railway through a chain of mountains when he has a plain valley before him, merely to show his skill." Well, that is exactly what a railway engineer does not like to do, and does in fact not do. He goes tunnelling through mountains only when, as a last resource, he has to do it; and exhibits his skill, if he has any, in selecting a route that shall be the least expensive. If there were such an engineer as imagined by Professor Willis, he would very soon be out of a job, and rightly.

Nor can we agree with the Professor's further remarks about the qualities of the masons of the Middle Ages. He admired their ingenuity, "but whatever may be said of their science as shown in their masonry, I believe they had none. They were perfectly practical and ingenious men; they worked experimentally; if their buildings were strong enough, there they stood; if they were too strong, they also stood; but if they were too weak, they gave way, and they put props and built the next stronger. That was their science, and very good practical science it was, but in many cases they imperilled their work and gave trouble to future restorers."

This is a generalisation, and too sweeping. Those older builders were not always like children with a toy box of bricks, piling up buildings carelessly until they toppled over. We have, of course, numerous instances of failures of foundations and walls, but many more of great churches lasting for centuries. The designers—the architects—were not empirics, and in the later ages, when the vast Perpendicular buildings went up, it would have been fatal to design in the haphazard way thus suggested. There seem almost always to have been contractors, and among them those whom we well may style 'contraptors'; those who

perform their work ill and set up contraptions instead of honest workmanship. Numerous instances of such shoddy work have come to light, astonishing the beholder that the buildings in which they occur should have lasted so long. In the middle of the eighteenth century, when it was proposed deeply to score the great Norman piers of the nave at Gloucester with patterns, the idea had to be abandoned because it was found that those pillars, 21 ft. 7 inches in circumference were mere shells of masonry, filled with rubble. Who were they who built in this foolhardy fashion, it might well be asked? We do not know; but there those giant pillars safely stand to this day, and will so stand if they are not interfered with. In like manner, when it was found necessary to restore Peterborough Cathedral, about 1885, the modern contractors discovered that their older fellows had perilously, as it seemed, built walls that looked solid but were filled with loose rubbish, and yet had to bear the weight of a tower.

The first large parish church to be built completely in the new Perpendicular style would appear to be that of Edington in Wiltshire, by, or in the time of the great Churchman who became Bishop of Winchester, William Edington, 1346-1361. But we are not told that he was versed in architecture, and the assumption therefore is that a school of architecture rapidly had arisen in the new style. During Edington's time as Bishop of Winchester the remodelling of that Cathedral was begun, a work which was to transform the starkly unornamental nave of the Norman period into an expression of the new ideals. A small portion only had been thus transformed when Edington died and was succeeded by that great master-builder, William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester from 1367

to 1404. Wykeham is by common consent acknowledged to have possessed great architectural skill, and we know him to have studied geometry and other sciences, and to have been concerned in great works for the King at Windsor, and in the building of Queensborough Castle. "Everything was done by him, and without him nothing." His work at Winchester Cathedral is distinctive from that of Edingdon, and finer. Here, then, we really have one architect-bishop ; but what amazes us is that one who held one of the greatest offices in the Church and the greatest office of State—that of Lord High Chancellor of England—together with other important posts, should have had the time for all these onerous works.

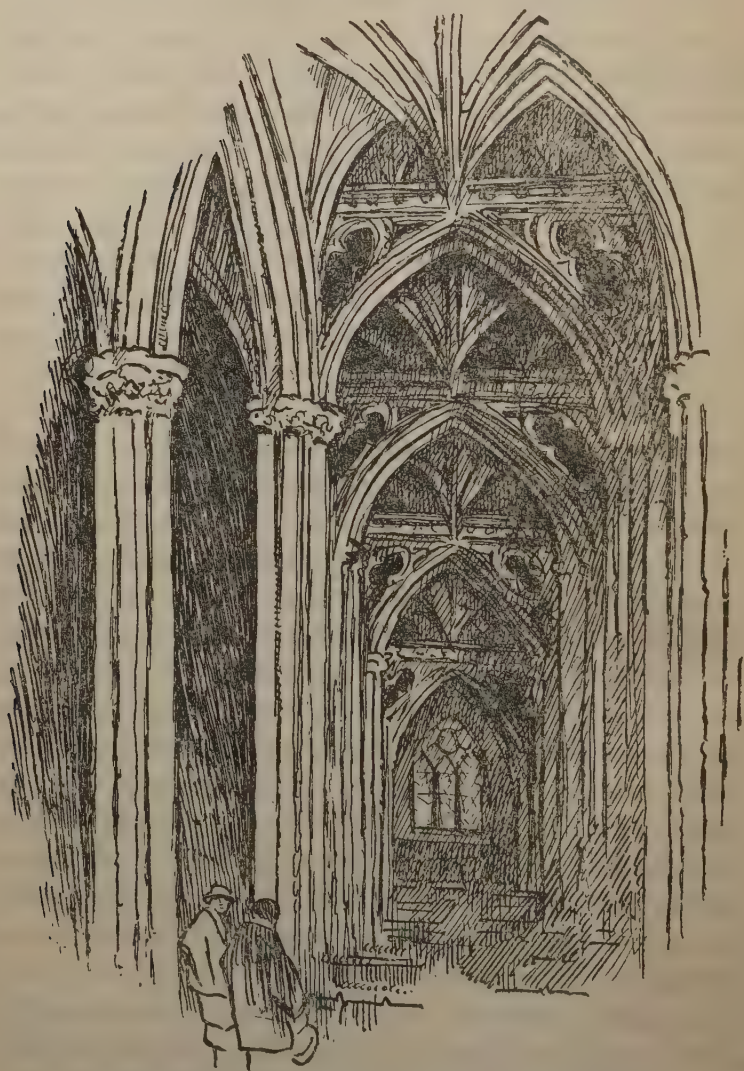
Wykeham's Perpendicular is not that of Gloucester, nor even that of Edington church. It is more robust : for the very best of reasons. The problem at Winchester was not that of Gloucester, where the thin, carpenter-like appliqué masonry was tacked on, so to say. Here at Winchester, the heavy, substantial Norman masonry was cut through and scaled down and refaced. Hence the style of the new work was, either of necessity or choice, determined. At Gloucester, the style of the later and exterior work, including the entirely new central tower, was determined by the implied need for being in artistic accord with what already had been effected in the transepts. Thus we have in the light graceful lofty central tower at Gloucester a Perpendicular design of great charm ; a work which perhaps, served to rouse the envy and the emulation of many places in the West, giving us that series of lovely towers for which the parish churches of Somerset are so justly famed. It was that rivalry of which the author of *Dives and Pauper*, writing in that age, complained :—"Why is it to dread the adorning of churches : what

is done in churches is more of pomp and pride than to the worship of God."

The richness of our ancient churches, abbeys and cathedrals in monumental effigies, in stained glass, and in sculptured work should serve to show us that there must in the middle ages, and later, have been in this country, as no doubt in others, a very large artistic industry in these things. Not the monks, but master-men who had workshops (or 'studios', if you like) were very extensive purveyors. One hesitates to compare these often consummate artists with the monumental masons whose wares we see in such places as the Euston Road and in the outskirts of modern great cemeteries; but, apart from the quality of their products, the range of their business was very much the same. They kept conventional designs and even executed works as stock for such customers as were not too insistent to have especial and original work done for them. You went to such an one and selected a conventional recumbent effigy or a monumental brass. It would serve. "Something in this style," the tradesman might say to a customer. It sounds very modern; but often the very modern is also the very ancient; and no doubt the new rich of that age purchased ancestors as well. But the stock effigies were there. Every seasoned antiquary has met with these, and can with but little difficulty distinguish between those old stock patterns and the work especially commissioned.

As with the monuments, so also with the enrichments of the great buildings of the middle and later Gothic periods. There they were: the contractors, the business men: they, and not the monks, adorned those buildings; and as time went on, and the Perpendicular period became one of a dead conven-

tionalism, it was they and their journeymen who did all : at so much a foot for sculpture, and so much for



SOUTH AISLE OF NAVE, BRISTOL CATHEDRAL

statues ; and so forth. Gone was the fine fervour of the artists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The

architects of the vast new buildings that replaced the old were rather engineers than architects, in so much as they had learned to a nicety how to calculate the strains and stresses in buildings that should be nearly all windows, with but little wall, and yet should, with the aid of larger and yet more outspreading buttresses, support the out-thrusting or crushing weight of elaborate stone vaulting.

X

CONDITION OF THE MONASTERIES AT THE TIME OF THE
DISSOLUTION

WE come now to some consideration of affairs as seen in the reports of Henry the Eighth's Commissioners, visiting the religious houses. It long has been the fashion to look upon these reports as biassed and unjust. The Commissioners, we are told, found what they were expected to find. But none of these reports criticises or condemns so severely the conduct of these houses and the persons of those in them as the records, still preserved, of the periodical visitations made by the Bishops, nor were worse things said by the Commissioners of the monks and nuns than the accusations they brought against each other.

And we have seen how Giraldus Cambrensis, from the outside, criticised the luxury of the Benedictines at Canterbury, and how Langland, later, found little to be of good report.

“ I saw the warkes and trade of Abbots there eche
one,
Of whome their flock to leade to hell not one doth
misse.”

Worse than a monke there is no fiende nor sprite in
hell,
Nothing more covetuose nor more strange be
knownen,
For if you give him aught, he maie possesse it well,
But if you aske him aught, Then nothing is his
owne."

In the last years of the monasteries, and convents, affairs notoriously were beyond remedy. A Priory of nuns at Littlemore, near Oxford, was in 1517 found to be in a shocking state. Efforts were made by the Prioress to hide the scandals of her house, but without effect. She had ordered her five nuns to declare all was well; but she herself had an illegitimate child, and was still visited by the father. One of the sisters also had a child. The Prioress at first denied these things, and then admitted them.

Chicksands Priory, one of the several religious houses of the strange Gilbertine Order, founded by Gilbert of Sempringham, for a mixed body of monks and nuns (the only monastic Order actually founded in England), was situated in Bedfordshire. This Order was an heroic attempt to revive a very early Christian type of convent, which had been essayed also, much earlier than Gilbert's day, in the Abbey of St. Hilda, at Whitby. There were never more than twenty-five Gilbertine houses in England. The domestic buildings of Chicksands Priory remain: the only example left. The Priory was dissolved in 1539 and surrendered quietly, by the Prior, John Plomer, at which time the Prioress was Margaret Graynger. There were then in residence six monks and eighteen nuns, a smaller number than in former years. When the King's Commissioners came to Chicksands, they

were denied admission by the Prioress, who said it was against the rule of the house to admit strangers ; but they obtained entrance, and found the nuns, as they reported, with sardonic humour, (in the quaint spelling of the report, "were not baron women.") One of the nuns had "three faire children.") The annual value of the house was £230 3s. 4d. The house and lands were granted to a family named, Snow, and were purchased from them in 1576 by one Peter Osborn. Chicksands Priory is now a country residence, chiefly of eighteenth century date, embodying the domestic portion of the monastery.

The most active and diligent among the Commissioners appointed by Cromwell were Dr. Layton and Thomas Legh, who travelled the length and breadth of the land, visiting the monasteries, sometimes with notice given, and sometimes in surprise visits ; questioning and examining, always bearing in mind the object was to find everywhere excuse for suppression and appropriation.

Richard Layton, born about 1500, was a son of William Layton of Dalemain, Cumberland. The circumstances of the family were poor and obscure, for he had very many brothers and sisters : as many, it was said, as thirty-two ! He declared that had it not been for the early patronage of Cromwell, he would have had "to carry a basket." As it happened, however, he was sent to the University of Cambridge, and acquitted himself well : took holy orders and was given a College rectory. He seems ever to have been a strenuous person, for he studied law, and was admitted advocate. In 1533 he was given the position of Dean of the Collegiate church of Chester-le-Street, Durham ; and was in 1535 considered a fit person to visit the University of Oxford, to enquire into its

administration and to reform it. He was at Oxford, accordingly, in July that year, at the head of a Commission, and swiftly drew up a new scheme. During the next month he was, with Thomas Legh and a party of minor officials, on the first of his series of visitations of the monasteries. He was as diligent a servant of Thomas Cromwell, as Cromwell was of the King, and on his several journeys he traversed the land with a surprising celerity, having regard to the difficulties of travel in those times. Layton was at length given the Deanery of York, but died early, in 1541.

While Layton, it may be said, often found in the monasteries the scandals and insufficiencies he was expected to find and was thus a pliant tool, yet in reading his reports, we are generally convinced of their essential sincerity. We note, that is to say, the animus against the monastic ideal, but it is scarce possible to allow his findings to be a farrago of lies or exaggerations, as writers prejudiced in favour of those obsolete monastic communities would have us believe.

Layton was, indeed, sometimes, according to his companion Commissioner, Thomas Legh, far too lenient. But Legh by all accounts, was a person of a violent, presumptuous and yet sordid character. He was one of the Leghs of Lyme, in Cheshire, a county family still settled there in state and much social consideration. Legh was by profession a lawyer. He became an advocate in 1531, and speedily rose so that in the following year he was sent Ambassador to Denmark. A man of grasping character, he was generally to the fore in those times of sudden change, when anything was to be made out of the ruin of others. In 1535, he was given the Mastership of Sherburn Hospital, Durham, and speedily enriched himself at its expense. He was made a Master in

Chancery in 1537 ; but meanwhile, from 1535, he was a Commissioner with Layton in the monastic visitations ; very unfavourably impressing one of the party, John ap Rhys, who wrote of his gross body and offensive demeanour, as well as of the vulgar magnificence that attended his activities : with his fourteen men in livery and his butler. His employer, Cromwell, himself complained of his " triumphant and presumptuous usage and gay apparel " ; and ap Rhys is indignant at his " ruffling, intolerable elation," and his " insolent, pompatique," behaviour and " satrapike countenance." Ap Rhys seems not to have liked him, to put it mildly. And thus the satrap lorded it in the Commission, in the manner of satraps from the ancient times in Persia, when they were more arrogant even than their masters. This bestial person had at length the honour of knighthood accorded him, May 11th, 1544, and died in the following year.

After visiting the Priory of Maiden Bradley, in Wiltshire, Dr. Layton, writing to Cromwell, says there was " an holy father Prior, and hath but vj children, and but one dowghter mariede, yet of the goodes of the monasterie trystyng shortly to marye the reste. His sones be tale men, waittyng upon hym, and he thanks Gode a never medelet with marytt women, but all with madens the fairest coulede be gottyn and always marede them ryght well. The pope, consideryng his fragilitie, gave hym licens to kepe an hore, and hath goode wrytyng *sub plumbo*, to discharge his conscience."

Of the Premonstratensian Abbey of Langdon, at West Langdon, between Deal and Dover, nothing remains save an undercroft upon which a modern red brick house is built. This Abbey was founded in 1192 by William de Auberville. It was a quite small Abbey. To this monastery the King's Com-

missioner, Dr. Layton, paid a surprise visit, with equally surprising results. Thus he writes to Cromwell, "Pleasit your goodnes to understande that, on Friday, xxij^o Octobris, I rode bake with spede to take an inventarie of Fowlestone, and from thens I went to Langden. Wheras immediatly discendyng from my horse, I sent Bartlett, your servant, with alle my servantes, to circumcept the Abbey, and surely to kepe alle bake doores and starting hoilles, etc. I my self went alone to the abbottes logeyng joyning upon the felde and wode, evyne lyke a cony clapper fulle of startyng hoiless, a goode space knokkyng at thabbottes dore, *nec vox nec sensus apparuit*, saveyng thabbottes little doge that, within his dore faste lokked, bayede and barkedd. I fownde a short polax standyng behinde the dore, and with yt I dasshede thabbottes dore in peisses, *ictu oculi*, and set one of my men to kepe that dore, and aboute howse I go with that polax in my hande, *ne forte*, for thabbot is a daingerouse, desperate knave and a hardy. But, for a conclusion, his hore, alias his gentle womman, bestyrrede her stumpis towards hir startyng hoilles, and ther Bartlett wachyng the pursuet, towke the tendre damoisel, and affter I had examynede hir, to Dover ther to the maire to sett hir in sum cage or prison for viij. dais, and I browgt holy father Abbot to Canterbury, and here, in Christeschurche I will leve hym in prison. In thiss soden doyng *ex tempore* to circumcept the howse and to serche, your servant John Antonie his men mervelede what felowe I was, and so dyde the reste of thabbay, for I was unknowyn ther of al men. At laste, I fownde her apparel in thabbottes cofer. To tell yowe all this commodie, but for thabbot a tragedie, hit were to long. Now hit shall appere to gentilmen of this contrey, and other the comons, that ye shall not

deprive or visite but upon substanciall growndes. Surely I suppose God hym self put hit in my mynde thus sodenly to make a serche at the begynnyng, bycause no chanon apperede in my syghte ; I suppose rather to have fownde a hore emongiste them then in thabbottes chambre."

And that is the last we hear of William Sayer, the Abbot in question, and of his Abbey.

A letter alike amusing and contemptible was written to Thomas Cromwell, by one Richard Beerly, one of the monks of Pershore Abbey, at the time its suppression was threatened. He acts the odious part of a tale-bearer, seeking his own advantage. Writing with a preposterous affectation of extreme humility, and with a weird and grotesque spelling, beyond the common run, even for those times, he says :— " Most reverent lord yn God, second person yn this rem of Englund, ynduyd with all grace and goodnes, y submyth my selfe unto your grace and goodnes, desyuryng you myckely to be good and gracyus lord unto me synful and poor creatur, my lowly and myck scrybullyng unto your nobull grace at thys tyme ys gruggyng yn my conchons that the relygyon wyche we do observ and keype ys no rull of sentt Benett nor yt no commandymment of God, nor of no sentt, but lyzth and foulyesse serymonys, meyd sum yn old tyme and sume yn our tyme, by lyzth and ondyscrytt faders, wych have done theyr dutys, and fulfellyd ther owne serymonys, an lett the preceps commandymentes of God go. And so have y do thys syx yere. Wych doth now greve my conchons sore, that y have bye a dyssymblar so long tyme, the wych relygon say sent Jamys, ys yn vayne and bryngyng forth no good fruttes ; bettur owtt then yn the relygon, except yt were the tru relygon of Chryst. Also we do nothing

seych for the doctryn of Chryst, but all fowloys our owne sensyaly and pleser. And this relgyon, as y supposse, ys all yn vayne glory, and nothyng worthy to be except nathes before God nor man. Also, most gracyus lord, ther ys a secrett thyng yn my conchons wyche dothe moveme to goo owt of the relygyon, an yfyt were never so perfett, wych no man may know but my gostly fader, the wych I supposs yp a man mothe guge yn othes yong persons as yn me selfe, for Chryst say, *nolite iudicare et non iudicabimini*: therfore y will guge my nowne conchons fyrst, the wych fautt he shall know of me heyrafter more largeorly, and many other fowll vycys dou amenckst relygyus men, not relygyus men as y thynk the owtt not to be cald, but dyssymblars with God. Now, most gracyus lord and most worthyst vycytar that ever cam amonckes us, helpe me owt of thys vayne relygyon, and macke me your servant, hande-mayd, and beydman, and save my sowlle, wych sheld be lest yt ye helpe yt not, the wych you may save with on word speckyng, and mayck me wych am now nawtt to cum unto grace and goodnes. Now y wyll ynstruy your grace sumwatt of relygyus men; and how the kynges grace commandyment ys keyp yn puttyng forth of bockes the beyschatt of Roms usurpt power. Monckes drynk and bowll after collacyon tell ten or xii. of the Clock, and cum to mattens as dronck as myss, and sume at dyys, and at tabulles, sume cum to mattens begenyng at the mydes, and sume when yt ys allmost done, and wold not cum ther so only for boddly punnysment; nothyng for Godes sayck, wyth many other vycys the use, wyche y have no loser now to express. Also Abbettes, monckes, prest don lyttyl or nothyng to put owtt of bockes the beyschatt of Romes name and hys usurpt power upon ys. No more unto your

nobul grace at thys tyme but Jesu preserve you to pleser. Amen.

Your commyssary commandyd me to wrytt my mynd unto your nobul grace, by my outhe I toyk of hym yn our chaptur hows.

By me, your beydman, Jan. Ryc. Beerley, now monck yn the monastery of Pershor.

To my nobull and gracyus lord
vycytar yn the kynges cortt be
thys byl delyveryd yn hast.

Dan Richard Beerley sadly wanted kicking, but we well may suppose he did not receive any such treatment ; unless indeed his brother monks discovered his talebearing. His "nobull grace," Thomas Cromwell, probably did nothing to help the writer save his soul, such as it was.

Henry Emery, the last Abbot of Warden, resigned December 4th, 1538, giving as reasons for his resignation the ignorance and seditious nature of the brethren in that monastery. After the Abbey had been visited by the King's Commissioners, the monks, he says, vexed him with many uncharitable surmises and opprobrious words. Apparently they suspected him of reporting their uncovenanted doings ; which, if he had not, in fact, then spoken of, he did in his letter of resignation. Few or none of his fifteen monks attended divinity lectures ; and when the Abbot, perceiving them neither to understand the rule of their Order, or to be at all literate, procured books of grammar for their instruction, they would not learn. One of the monks, sent to Shefford on business, stayed there in an ale-house all night, and on his return refused to acknowledge the Abbot's authority to correct him. The Abbot not obscurely charged some of his

monks with immoral practices in connection with a youth named Hugh. Finally, he gives particulars of how the sub-Prior was taken with a woman in a hedge of the vineyard, and promised eight shillings to the person who so found him, to say nothing.

These would seem to have been in the nature of counter-accusations, for already, in 1492, two of the Warden monks, Dom. John Clifton and Dom. John Butler, had declared the Abbot an immoral person: "and might have given additional information except that 'they dare not disclose more'."

XI

FATE OF THE ABBEYS

HOW swiftly passed the era of monasticism, when once the Reformation in England had been effected, and with what completeness have some of the Abbeys disappeared ! Of the great Abbey of Oseney at Oxford no stone remains and the very memory of it is cherished only by antiquaries, while the site is occupied by something extremely antithetic to a monastery : a railway-station. Not one stone remains upon another on the site where Sawtry Abbey once stood, near Stilton, on the Great North Road.

The fate of a great Abbey near London—that of the Cluniac Abbey of St. Saviour at Bermondsey, was as melancholy. No one to-day connects the dreary South London region of Bermondsey with a great mediæval monastery ; but if you look at any map of London and glance along from London Bridge and Tooley Street and so into Bermondsey Street, you presently will find Bermondsey Square and then such significant names as, Abbey Road, Grange Road and

Grange Walk. Those names, unlike the names of many roads and streets in modern suburbs, are not mere chance or fancy titles : they were given because those thoroughfares do indeed traverse the site of an Abbey which existed there from 1089 until 1537.

It is assumed that Bermondsey takes its name from some Saxon lord, Beormund, although no historic person of that name is known. Here, amid the marshes on the south side of the lower Thames, his property was islanded. It was " Beormund's-ey ", or island.

The Abbey was neighboured by a Royal Palace, existing from the days of the last Saxon kings until the time of Henry the Second, or perhaps a little later. The ending of it is obscure ; and it would seem that it was abandoned and that in a rebuilding and extension of the Abbey it at last disappeared. The Abbey, founded as a Cluniac Priory, was elevated to the greater dignity in 1399. The last Abbot, Robert Wharton, who surrendered the Abbey, was made Bishop of St. Asaph. Sir Thomas Pope, a law-officer of the Crown, acquired the site of Bermondsey Abbey, and built himself a mansion which he called " Bermondsey House." That has disappeared as utterly as the Abbey itself.

It is difficult to realise, standing in Bermondsey Square (which, absurdly enough, is triangular) that this was once the great court of the monastery. Small, intensely respectable dull brick Early Victorian houses line two sides of it ; houses in which the minor characters in Dickens's novels might well be housed, are the one feature and on the third side a new and very blatant building, a petrol-station, has arisen. There, into one of the stone pillars leading into its yard, is inserted one poor little vestige of the once great and stately Abbey. It is a russet-brown stone, not much

more than a foot square, covered in with glass. An inscription says it was found during excavations in 1922, at a depth of thirteen feet, and was part of a house built on the site of the Abbey. It bears, incised, a cross within a circle: obviously a consecration-cross.

And that is all, with the exception of two rusty iron hinges projecting from a stuccoed wall in Grange Walk, which were once part of the east gate of the monastery.

Here then, is romance of a sorry sort. Up to 1760 there remained considerable portions of the monastery gateways, but by 1806 even those were gone. At that time a Mr. James Riley set up in the grounds of his house near the parish churchyard a pyramid of sculptured fragments from the Abbey, but those disappeared, very many years since.

Such is the tale to be told of an Abbey in which died, after residence there for six months, Katharine de Valois, widow of Henry the Fifth, in her thirty-fifth year; and in 1492, after six years residence, Queen Elizabeth Woodville, widow of Edward the Fourth. By her will, she left to her daughter, Elizabeth of York, wife of Henry the Seventh, and to her other children, her blessing, "having no worldly goods to do the Queen's grace, my dearest daughter, a pleasure with, neither to reward any of my children according to my heart and mind."

One after another, rather belatedly, our historic buildings, the relics, until recent years too little valued, of mediæval times, the ruined castles, cathedrals, abbeys and priories of England, Wales and Scotland, are now becoming the care of the nation, and the Commissioners of Woods and Forests and those other worshipful personages the directors of His Majesty's Office of Works, under the yet more worshipful Chief

Commissioner of that Department, have acquired, by purchase or by gift, and are caring for, buildings that too long have been left to chance, the ravages of the weather, or to the insidious destructiveness of ivy.

Early among these relics thus to be acquired—possibly it was actually the earliest—was Tintern Abbey, purchased from the Duke of Beaufort.

The list of abbeys and the ruins of other religious houses thus placed in the keeping of the nation and explored and kept in repair by the Office of Works, is a large and growing one. It includes Whitby Abbey, Rievaulx Abbey, Castle Acre Priory, and the remains of the Abbey of Muchelney, the property of the National Trust.

GLASTONBURY ABBEY

It is claimed for Glastonbury that it is the most sacred place in the British Isles. St. Columba's Iona, St. Aidan's and St. Cuthbert's Lindisfarne, and the scenes of the activities of St. Paulinus are lesser things than this early stronghold of the primitive British Church in the West ; while Canterbury, of course we know, historically, to be merely the scene in A.D. 596 of a re-Christianising of the eastern part of a Britain, lapsed into paganism, by that mission of Augustine from Rome which gave Rome a starting-point for its pretence to be the authority here in matters spiritual, and once indeed in matters temporal as well.

The early British Christian Church, tolerated by the Edict of Constantine the Great in A.D. 313 : a great act of recognition by the British-born Roman Emperor, born at York, never has ceased to exist. It is the origin of what we style the " Anglican Church " to-day. The earliest building of that period yet discovered is that of the Christian Church whose foundations were unearthed in the ruins of the Roman town of *Calleva Atrebatum*, hard by the village of Silchester, on the borders of Berkshire and Hampshire. It is considered to date from the actual year of Constantine's Edict.

While the successive invasions and conquests of the greater part of Britain by Saxons and Danes destroyed the Christian religion there, they never accomplished so much in the West, or in Wales ; and they failed to

overcome the native princes in those then remote parts. In that twilight period, when the Roman civilisation had gone down in fire and slaughter, petty chieftains still continued to battle, not unsuccessfully, with the invading pagans ; and from the floating legends of their deeds was born the story of King Arthur, the great champion. If ever there was such an actual personage, and if he is not the personification of all the brave native princes of that time, desperately battling with the fierce Saxons, his period would be from about A.D. 480, shortly after the last of the Roman legions had left Britain. Arthur's traditional first great battle and victory over Cerdic, King of the West Saxons, at Mount Badon, is placed at A.D. 515.

Arthur, indeed, does not figure in the romantic legends of the foundation of the Church at Glastonbury, but here we are in the mystic land of King Arthur, which stretches from hence to the Land's End, comprising all Somerset, Devon and Cornwall ; and here, in this Isle of Avalon, he is said to have been laid to rest, until that time when he shall rise to help his England in the hour of her greatest need. The Land of King Arthur is not, however, only the West of England. It also is Brittany ; and indeed, we find him, in legends, so far north as Camelot, near Falkirk, and at Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh ; which shows us, by the mere impossibility of any one man in those remote times being active in regions so far apart, how very largely a myth he is.

But that there was some champion, prominent above all others, we scarce can doubt. Around the memory of his deeds the fervid Celtic imagination wove as time went on, more and more legends, until the story of Arthur became almost a religion. According to this story, he sailed, after his last great battle, to the

Isle of Avalon, there to recover of a grievous wound ; and there, instead of recovering, he died. It was in 1171 that Henry the Second, romantically believing in the story of the burial of Arthur here, with the body of his beautiful, but not altogether admirable Queen, Guinevere, brought from Amesbury, commanded that search should be made and their remains be removed from the churchyard to a place of greater honour, in the Abbey. The Abbot, Henry's nephew, we are told, discovered them, placed in the hollowed trunk of a huge oak, buried sixteen feet deep. The skeleton, said to be that of King Arthur, was of gigantic size. A strand of golden hair was still to be seen with the woman's skeleton. A leaden cross also was said to have been found, inscribed : " Hic jacet sepultus inclytus Rex Arthurus in insula Avallonia." These relics were placed in the Abbey Church, within an ornate tomb, before the High Altar. All trace of them was lost in the destruction which followed upon the dissolution in 1536.

It would be too much to place entire belief in this alleged discovery of the relics of King Arthur and Guinevere ; and if indeed we were inclined to belief, the added story of the leaden cross found with them is suspiciously like an attempt made at the time to bring in evidence to the support of a discovery which might well be open to doubt. Besides, the phrasing of the Latin does not seem to be what might be expected, if it were genuine.

But the Arthurian legend does not depend upon material things. If it did, it would be in sorry case indeed. It reigns in the romantic mind, predisposed to marvels, and is wholly independent of actual records or tangible things. Indeed, we are here, at Glastonbury, and in Somerset in general, in a land of romance

and golden dreams : the mystic land of the Isle of Avalon which figures in legends and poetry from the earliest ages to our own. Tennyson did but put into modern English these ages-old traditions when he wrote of—

“ The island valley of Avilion,
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea.”

The poet's enthusiasm, somewhat excessive in speaking of a happy valley where no rain ever falls takes no account of how disastrous a thing that would be in nature.

Arthur, myth or actual personage, is of a period by no means so remote as the first dwellers in Avalon. He would have been a modern man, compared with those lake-dwellers whose remains have been found at Meare and other places in this region : the primitive men whose dwellings largely were in huts of reeds and wattles built upon platforms supported on poles thrust into the shallow water. They lived by fishing and hunting ; but though they were primitive, the remains of the pottery they made show they had an excellent sense of ornament.

The strange scenery of this inland sea, with the isolated peaks of Tor Hill and Boroughbridge, in those remote times islanded amid the meres, made this region mysterious to a degree. It was almost inaccessible : a reason for Alfred the Great selecting the Isle of Athelney, a part of it, for the rallying of his forces, more than three hundred years after the Arthurian period ; when history, rather than legend ruled.

But how did the name "Glastonbury" come into being? There are at least six different derivations offered. The most likeable of these is from the British "Ynys Vitrin," Latinised as "Insula Vitrea," and translated by the Saxons into "Glæstygabyrig." These are topographically descriptive of a region which then was a still and calm inland sea, whose untroubled surface was likened to glass. Overlooking this mirror-like sea was the isle—one of several such isles, but smaller—dominated by the spectacular, mountain-like hill we now know as Glastonbury Tor, which rises



GLASTONBURY

abruptly to a height of 500 feet. This was the "Avalon" of legends and of the poets.

There seems to be no reason for doubting that Glastonbury Abbey is the oldest house of the Christian religion in England. None can determine who founded it, or when, but when Augustine came, sorely against his own will, into Kent, in A.D. 596, the chapel existing at Glastonbury was already ancient. How ancient history does not tell us, but the lack of it is amply supplied by the legends, which stagger belief. According to them, Joseph of Arimathæa, landing in A.D. 63, with eleven companions in the south-west of England, found his way to this then almost inaccessible spot. The legend tells us St. Joseph, sent

by St. Philip, was accompanied by, among others, Lazarus, Mary and Martha; and that here they built the first oratory or chapel, of wattles; and here they lived and died. William of Malmesbury is the chronicler to whom we owe this story, which was even in his time, the twelfth century, a very ancient legend. He says nothing of how Joseph came to Wirrall Hill, and sticking his staff in the ground, and exclaiming "Weary All," sank, with his companions, exhausted. Nor does he say anything about the staff blossoming and becoming the original Holy Thorn. These stories were interpolated in the thirteenth century, as also was that of St. Joseph bringing with him the Holy Grail. In the east window of Langport church is a fragment of ancient glass which shows St. Joseph holding, not that sacred Cup of the Last Communion, but two cruets, supposed to hold some of the Holy Blood and sweat of the Saviour.

A story that St. Patrick was for a time at Glastonbury is a mixture of myth and pretence, originating in an early Irish missionary abbot of the same name as that of the great St. Patrick, whose day is March 17th. The lesser and little-known Patrick came over in the ninth century. The date is given as A.D. 850. The monastery of Glastonbury readily lent itself to the confused ideas that in the course of time arose over this similarity of names; and, greatly to the indignation of Irish Roman Catholics, pretended to have in its keeping the bones of that famous holy man, who really is buried at Downpatrick, and belongs to a period four hundred years earlier.

Actual history seems to dawn at Glastonbury with the year 601, when one Gwrgen (whose name sometimes is Latinised as "Gurguntius") King of Dumnonia, is said to have made a grant of land in Ynys-

witrin to "the old church" of which Worgen is said to have been Abbot. This statement is that of William of Malmesbury, who declares he saw the actual charter.

This, it will be conceded, is antiquity of a very high order, but it did not suffice for other chroniclers, or romancers, who must needs forge (in every sense of the word) connecting links between Joseph of Arimathæa and the historic period; and so they tell us of Pope Eleutherius, in A.D. 166, sending at the request of King Lucius two missionaries to Britain, who found their way to Glastonbury where they discovered Joseph's almost forgotten Chapel. They are said to have re-established a religious community on the spot, with an Abbot, one Worgret, at its head. These were hardy and fearless inventors. They bring St. Patrick into the picture, and tell us he established a monastery and became its first Abbot and died here. (St. Patrick was surely a wonderful man, for he died also [and more credibly] at Downpatrick, in Ireland). But this, as already we have learnt, was the other, and lesser St. Patrick. St. David, who died A.D. 546, also is said to have built a chapel here; and Paulinus, visiting Glastonbury in A.D. 630, encased the old St. Joseph's Chapel, by this time grown truly venerable and decrepit, in lead-covered boards. But, strangely enough, all these accounts say nothing of King Arthur, who should have been heard of, in connection with these doings, certainly at some time between the alleged visits of St. Patrick and Paulinus.

In A.D. 704, King Ina of Wessex granted a charter dated from that ancient wattle-covered Chapel of St. Joseph, in which it is styled "*Lignea Basilica*," *i.e.*; "the wooden church." He also built "the great church," the first of the buildings of Glastonbury Abbey, and with it a monastery. A charter granted

in 1002 by King Canute (whom you may style Knut, Knud, or Cnut, if you will, no man being able to gainsay your right so to do) granted a charter also dated from the old chapel, which endured until 1184, when it and all else in Glastonbury was utterly consumed by a great fire, on May 20th.

But in the meanwhile the Abbey had suffered from



‘ ST. JOSEPH’S CHAPEL,’ GLASTONBURY

invasions by the Danes under Hubba, who was finally defeated and slain by Alfred the Great, at Appledore, in A.D. 882. That great figure, Dunstan, a son of Glastonbury, born here A.D. 924, educated here in the monastery, and Abbot in A.D. 940, rebuilt the Abbey and reformed the monastery; making it a centre of learning and culture whence scholars went forth to furnish many of the other great religious

houses of England. Dunstan, according to the legends, took up the craft of smith in a cell he built, 5 ft. by 2½ ft. and became a worker in iron, in order to subdue his too-abounding energies. Even at the forge the Devil, in the familiar story of St. Dunstan, must come and tempt him, whereupon Dunstan took him by the nose, with a pair of red-hot tongs. It is Jacobus de Voragine who tells us, in the *Golden Legend*, of this encounter :—

“ When he was at his work, his heart on Jesus Christ, his mouth occupied with holy prayers, and his hands busy, the Devil, who had great envy of him, came to him in an eventide in the likeness of a woman, as he was busy to make a chalice, and with smiling said that she had great things to tell him, and then he bade her say what she would, and then she began to tell him many nice trifles and no manner of virtue therein, and then he supposed she was a wicked spirit, and anon caught her by the nose with a pair of tongs of iron, burning hot, and then the Devil began to roar and cry, and fast drew away, but St. Dunstan held fast till it was far in the night, and he then let her go, and the fiend departed with a horrible noise and cry, and said, that all might hear : ‘ Alas ! what shame hath this carle done to me : how may I best quit him again ? ’ But never again had the Devil lust to tempt him in that craft.”

The Abbey accepted and never discarded this story, as we may see on one side of the Abbey seal of the fourteenth century, in which Dunstan is seen between Saints Patrick and Benignus, with a version of this encounter beneath. Among the strictly unauthentic relics long kept in the Abbey church were the actual tongs St. Dunstan used on that occasion.

Dunstan, a person of noble birth, had most things

in his favour. He figured at the Court of the Saxon Kings, and in those times when learning, and even an educated condition of any kind was a privilege of only the religious, he became statesman as well as monk and Abbot. But jealousies beset the path of such ; and he fell into disfavour, after having been the trusted friend and counsellor of Edmund and Edred. In the reign of Edwy he was driven forth from the Abbey he had reformed and changed from a somewhat lax establishment of secular priests into an approximation to the strict Benedictine rule. Legends tell us that as he was departing there was heard a sound " like unto the wheezy voice of a gleesome hag," or, as some others declared, " like the bleating of a calf." They all devoutly crossed themselves, for they knew it to be the exulting laughter of the Devil.

Fallen thus from the King's favour, Dunstan retired to Flanders, in A.D. 956, but on the accession of Edgar he returned. Already he had been made Bishop of Crediton, and was now translated to Worcester and thence in 961 to London. For a time, he was Bishop both of London and of Worcester. Then the highest position in the Church fell to him : he was elected Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dunstan, as a monk, was strongly opposed to the secular clergy, and sought everywhere to eject them, much to the discontent of many in the Church. It was a part of the centuries of struggle that were to follow. At a conference at Winchester in A.D. 975, a figure of the Saviour was said to have become vocal and to have sided with Dunstan, and at a further meeting at Calne in the following year the floor of the meeting-place suddenly gave way, precipitating the conference into a considerable depth and injuring many. This was said to be a judgment, a manifestation

of the Divine wrath against Dunstan's opponents ; but there were not wanting those who saw in it an obvious trick, as they had in the "miraculous " interposition of the speaking figure on the Cross of a year earlier. And so Dunstan, in the fullness of years, died Archbishop of Canterbury, in A.D. 988 , and in due course was canonised.

Dunstan's pre-Norman Abbey and monastery was not thought stately enough in the new era, and they were wholly rebuilt in 1171 ; but these, as already noticed, were wholly destroyed by fire in 1184, when the remains of St. Joseph's Chapel perished. On the site of that building was erected, as a kind of " Galilee " at the west end of the vastly enlarged newer Abbey the exquisitely beautiful Chapel of St. Mary, to which still clings the traditional name of " St. Joseph's Chapel." The Abbey, added to at various times and in part rebuilt, became by degrees almost the lengthiest ecclesiastical building in the country, measuring as it did, from east to west, 528 feet, and at the last when Abbot Beere had made his additions, it extended to almost 590 feet : thus becoming easily the lengthiest. The monastery became the richest in England, with vast estates, and the Abbots possessed no fewer than twelve manor-houses, in addition to their princely " Abbot's Lodging " within the monastery itself. They were mitred Abbots, sitting as such in Parliament, with the rank of an Earl ; and took precedence over all others until 1154, when Adrian the Fourth (Nicholas Breakspear, the only Englishman who ever became Pope) gave the first place to St. Albans, partly because he had been a monk there, but ostensibly because St. Alban was the proto-martyr of Britain.

Of the great and wealthy Abbots who reigned here and added to the glories of Glastonbury it would

require a whole book to tell in detail. Let us, then, concentrate upon Abbot Richard Beere, the last save one, 1493-1524, who built at the east end the Edgar Chapel, and, finding the great central tower of the Abbey church showing signs of insecurity, added four inverted supporting arches at the crossing, between the piers, as had been done at Wells Cathedral ; giving the appearance (probably quite without intention) of St. Andrew's crosses. He also, returning from a diplomatic mission to Italy, built north of the Abbey Church a Chapel of Our Lady of Loretto ; and to the south, for use in Easter Week, a Chapel of the Sepulchre. These were the last architectural works in the Abbey, which was now coming to its final years. Abbot Beere was succeeded by Richard Whiting, of whom no ill was said : nor indeed of this great and well-conducted monastery. Whiting was a scholar, a graduate of Cambridge ; and the King's Commissioners, coming to the Abbey in 1534, had no charge to bring against it, or him. He acknowledged the King's supremacy ; and it might well have been considered that the Abbey and the monastery would have been spared. But the immense riches of Glastonbury proved too strong a temptation, in this general dissolution and no exception was made.

Some information seems to have been given to the King's Commissioners, warranting a further visit ; and in 1539 they went to the Abbot, then in residence at his manor of Sharpham, and examined him ; whereupon it appeared that he had secreted much of the Abbey's plate, so that it should not fall into the King's hands. Opinions have been offered that the Abbot did so, not as these many articles of plate being the intrinsically valuable articles that actually they were, but as sacred vessels. However that may be, this was not

the view of the Commissioners. Writing to Cromwell, they say they found in the Abbey treasure-house neither jewels, plate, nor ornaments sufficient to serve a poor parish church, " wherof we colde not a litell marvill ; and therupon ymediately made so diligent enquiye and serche, that with vigilante labour we muche improvide the same, and have recoveride agayne into our handes both money, plate and adornmenttis of the church. . . . We assure your lordeshippe that thabbott and the monkis forsaide hade ymbecelyde and stollyne as muche plate and adornamentes as wolde have sufficide to have begone a new abbay ; what they mentte therby we leve to your judgmentt. Whether the kyngis pleasure shalbe to execute his lawis upon the saide 4 persones and to minister them justice, according to their desertes, or to extende his mercy towardses them, and whatt his majesties pleasur is, hitt may please your lordeshipp to advertise us therof. The house is greate, goodly, and so pryncely as we have not sene the lyke ; with 4 parkes adjoynnge, the furthestmoste of them but 4 myles distaunte from the house, a grete mire, whiche ys 5 miles cumpas, being a myle and a halfe distante from the house, well replenished with greate pykis, bremes, perche, and roche ; 4 faire manor placis, belonging to the late abbott, the furthestmost beyng but 3 myles distante, beyng goodly mansions, and also one in Dorsettshire, 20 myles distante from the late monastery."

Abbot Whiting was arrested at Sharpham and conveyed to London, where he was thrown into the Tower, whence he was remitted to Wells, charged with acts of " very hant and rank treason," and the robbery of his church. The Abbot's fate was already determined before his trial, as appears by Cromwell's own notes in his private " Remembrances " :— " Item : Coun-

cillors to give evidence against the Abbot of Glaston : Richard Pollard, Lewis Forster, and Thomas Moyle. Item : To see that the evidence be well sorted and the indictments well drawn. Item : the Abbot of Glaston to be tried at Glaston, and also executed there."

On November 14th, 1539, the Abbot was arraigned at Wells (not Glastonbury), in the great hall of the Bishop's Palace, and sentenced to death. The next day he and two of his monks, John Thorne and Roger James. were drawn on a hurdle from Wells to Glastonbury, where they were hanged on the summit of the Tor. Whiting was eighty years of age at the time. Even the fierce Henry and his minions well might have let the old man live. But he was reported to have taken his death "very patiently," and to have asked the King's pardon, as did his monks. His head was fixed on a pole over the Abbey Gate, and his body was quartered and sent to Ilchester, Wells, Bath and Bridgwater. Abbot Whiting was beatified by the Roman Church in 1896.

At its dissolution, Glastonbury Abbey had an annual value of £3,500, equal to about £14,000, in our own pre-war currency ; and possessed plate of over 11,000 ounces.

The Abbey and its immediate lands were granted by Edward the Sixth to the Duke of Somerset, the Lord Protector ; who really, being all-powerful at that time, probably granted them to himself. But the Protector, who could not long protect himself, fell from power in 1552, and was executed. The property passed through several hands, none caring for the noble buildings, which were torn down piecemeal and sold in cartloads, at sixpence a load, to form the causeway made in 1792-4 across the marshes, to Wells.

All the many relics of the saints were dispersed when the Abbey ceased to be, but the Holy Thorn remained until years after. The tree blossomed annually on Christmas Day, the birthday of the Saviour. It aroused the enmity of the early Puritans, one of whom in the time of Queen Elizabeth cut down the venerable tree. It had two trunks. One of these the man had severed, and had cut almost through the other when a chip flew off and put out one of his eyes.



THE ABBOT'S KITCHEN, GLASTONBURY

Several cuttings were taken from this truly venerable relic ; and they have to-day many descendants, which bloom, not only in spring, but also on or about Christmas Day. There is no miracle about it : the thorn was, and is, one of a variety of the common thorn which blooms twice a year.

In 1907 the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey were purchased in the time of Dr. Kennion, Bishop of Bath and Wells, from funds raised for the purpose.

What, then, of Glastonbury to-day? From a distance, with the great Tor forming so commanding a feature in the otherwise level landscape, it looks all that the legends of marvels make it : a place of ineffable beauty and remote charm, having nothing in common with the workaday world of to-day. So might anyone think ; how then should Glastonbury not have seemed in those remote ages, when it was surrounded by an inland sea, the mystic Isle of Avalon and the last home of the Saints ?

We shall be bitterly disappointed if we harbour such dreams, to the exclusion of matter of fact. For myself, in such romantic mood did I first come to Glastonbury, many years ago. Foolishly I proposed a ruined Abbey, set amidst the apple-orchards of the poets' Avalon. There might be some rustic cottages : there might be even a village. But there was a town. Also there was a railway-station ; and there was every adjunct of what then was the nineteenth century. Foolish, you say, to expect the Glastonbury of romance! But the poets did it. And to-day? Well, Glastonbury, like every other place of interest and of beauty, has shared in the publicity of the times, and the place of dreams has become a parking-place for motor-cars.

Apart from these melancholy thoughts, and coming to it without such unreasonable expectations as those which lead you to visualise an actual Glastonbury of Arthurian or Early Christian, or even of mediæval romance, Glastonbury is indeed a place of charm and beauty. There are the Abbey ruins, in their meadows among noble trees, where you may conjure up the past quite easily ; rejecting the fantastic marvels of those times (and some preposterous recent alleged psychic marvels too). And there, too—all that remains of the Abbey's domestic buildings—is the stupendously

large Abbot's Kitchen, built by Abbot Froome, 1420-1453, with its four huge fireplaces. These used to be cited as evidence of the waste and gluttony of the Abbots and the monks ; but as a sheer matter of fact, the kitchen redounds rather to the credit of the Abbey, for it was a necessity of the abounding hospitality extended to all comers, of all classes. My lord Abbot's own kitchen was in his own stately house, the Abbot's Lodging, where, himself ranking as a noble, he entertained the noblest. Other strata of society, on pilgrimage, or merely travelling this way, were lodged in the various guesten-halls ; claiming, and accorded, lodging for two nights, after which they could not, as a general rule, stay. For those who sought longer to remain there was built by Abbot Selwood in 1475 the *novum hospitium*, the "George" inn, which still exhibits its original Perpendicular stone-panelled front. Here the visitors stayed so long as they pleased on the like footing in which to this day you may do the same.

The 'Red Lion' inn is built over the Abbey gate. Close by the Gothic house still called "the Tribunal," was once the court in which my lord Abbot tried cases offending against his local supreme jurisdiction. It was built by Abbot Beere, who built also the tower of St. Benedict's parish church, as we may see by his rebus, a beer-jug, carved on it. The other parish church, that of St. John, has a beautiful tower whose upper stage is finished with overhanging, bracketed-out pinnacles, of a type seen nowhere else than in Somerset. This is not, however, really ancient, but was added midway in the nineteenth century, as a copy of the greatly-admired upper stage of the tower of St. Stephen's church, Bristol.

In Chalkwell Street remains the Abbot's Barn, and

on the way to Glastonbury Tor we pass Chalice Hill, where, according to one of the accretions foisted upon earlier legends, Joseph of Arimathæa buried the Sangraal, the chalice of the Last Communion. The name of Chalkwell Street points out the original name this well bore, before it was given its present wholly illegitimate title.

Tor Hill is crested with the fourteenth century tower of a former Chapel of St. Michael. This tower bears upon its face a quaint sculpture of a soul being weighed in the scales of Judgment, and St. Michael and the Devil contending for possession of it.

ST. ALBAN'S ABBEY

THE great Abbey of St. Albans, since 1878 the cathedral of a new see then created, is, next to Winchester Cathedral, the largest ecclesiastical building in England, measuring as it does, from east to west, 550 feet. It stands higher than any cathedral in England, being over 340 feet above sea level.

The town, or, as we now should say, the city of St. Alban, is almost the oldest in England, ranking in that respect after Colchester, the oldest. It was in Roman times the Roman colonial town of Verulamium, whose site was down below, in the water-meadows of the river Ver, hard by St. Michael's, where some of the gaunt ruins of the Roman walls may yet be seen.

It was in A.D. 305, in the Diocletian persecution, that the happening occurred, which gave rise, in A.D. 793, to the founding of the Abbey. In that recrudescence of paganism, under the Emperor Diocletian, Alban, a native Christian, was taken to the then open hillside above the town of Verulamium, and there put to death.

With him, as we are told, suffered one Amphibalus, a Christian priest. Alban was condemned to die for having sheltered the priest. But critics of these ancient stories believe there was never any person named Amphibalus, and say the name was that of a cloak worn in those times. The name of the hill was Holmhurst.

It was Offa, King of Mercia, who founded the Abbey,

in A.D. 793. He was moved to do so as an act of expiation for his share in the murder of Ethelbert, and bethought him of St. Alban, as the martyr had now become ; venerated already as the proto-martyr of Britain.

He then sought, together with a great concourse of priests, that hill-top where Alban and Amphibalus had been beheaded ; and there they found the remains of Alban.

Offa founded the city of St. Alban, as well as the Abbey, which was a monastery of the Benedictine order. Offa, " the terrible," as he was named, has left his name on the map, not only at Offa's Dyke, his great earthwork boundary between England and Wales, all that distance between the Severn and the Dee, but also in numerous place-names, such as Great and Little Offley.

When the terrible Saxon king was gathered to his fathers, weakness developed in the land, and invading Danes, who had a greater quality for terrorism, came and sacked St. Albans, carrying off the bones of the martyr to their own country, where they deposited them in a place called Owensee.

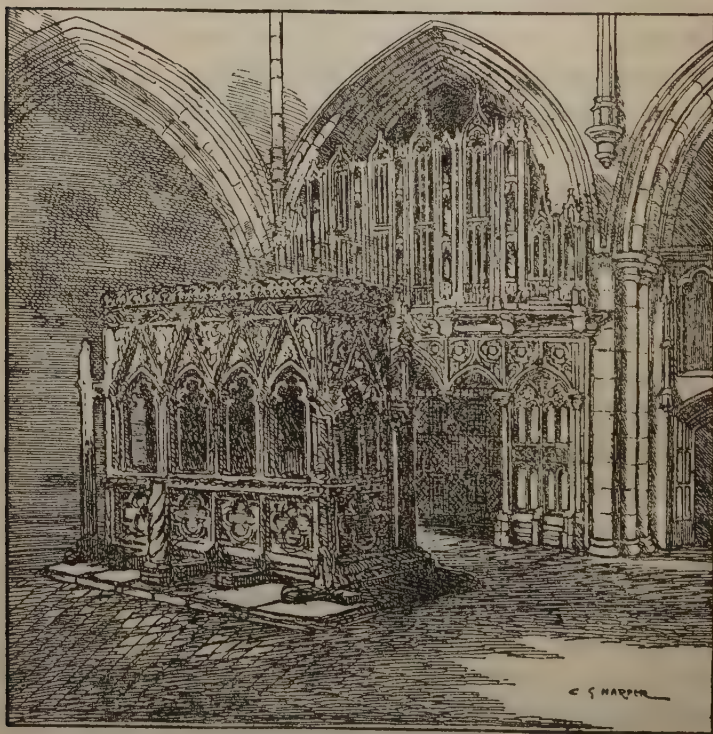
These relics were afterwards recovered, but again, some seventy years later, in the time of Aelfrith the Second, the eleventh Abbot, the Danes again appeared. The Abbot placed the bones in a position of security in a hole in the walls.

Nicholas Breakspear, the only Englishman who ever was elected Pope, was a native of Abbot's Langley, near St. Albans, and was a son of a servant in the Abbey in whose domestic offices he himself once occupied a menial position. He was elected Pope in 1154. He took the title of Adrian IV., and died in 1159. As Pope he greatly forwarded the Abbey of St.

Albans, according precedence to it over all other Abbeys in England.

It retained this distinction until 1396, when Westminster was given the first place. We may consider that, since its elevation to the dignity of a cathedral, it has more than recovered its old position.

The existing Abbey church dates from the time of



SHRINE OF ST. ALBAN

Abbot Paul de Caen, the first Norman Abbot, who took down the Saxon buildings. He was succeeded by John de Cella, who demolished what his predecessor had built and began anew on that ambitious scale which has made the Abbey so lengthy an edifice. But he had planned on too vast a scale, and the works

long were idle, as all his funds were exhausted. Another, William de Trumpington, resumed them ; but, in fact, the building was never wholly completed.

The great bulk of the Abbey is Norman ; the nave and transepts of a very severe and plain character. In the triforium of the north transept are some ringed baluster shafts saved from the former Saxon building. Vast quantities of red Roman brick and tile are used in the construction ; spoils from the deserted Roman town of Verulamium. The great central tower is almost wholly built of these materials. In 1870, during restoration works, a plaster facing was wholly removed, disclosing the beautiful red of the Roman bricks.

Between 1880 and 1890, the first Lord Grimthorpe, Sir Edward Beckett Denison, as he had been, expended £120,000 on restoring the Abbey, with himself as amateur architect. A sum of £40,000, raised by public subscription, had already been spent between 1870 and 1879.

Lord Grimthorpe's work is, in general, the derision of architects and antiquaries, particularly in respect of the great circular window of the north transept, and the transept turrets, built with imitation Roman bricks and tiles, which were made for the occasion.

The Lady Chapel, of the Decorated period, is the latest work in the Abbey, and the most ornate. The great screen in the Choir is like a vast stone wall with many niches filled with statues.

It is one of a type reproduced at Winchester Cathedral, Christchurch Priory, and Southwark Cathedral, and is of early fifteenth century " Perpendicular " style.

The Chapel of St. Alban was the holiest place in the Abbey, for it held the shrine of the proto-martyr, enclosing his relics. A watching-chamber, built so that, day or night, one or other of the monks should

keep watch for the safety of those holy bones in that shrine, is still there ; but alas ! for those relics ! The ransacking of the Abbey in the time of Henry VIII. effectually disposed of them, and the elaborate shrine itself, together with that of St. Amphibalus, was broken into many fragments.

These broken stones were found in the years 1868-72, and were carefully joined together and re-erected. When it is considered that the shrine of St. Alban was broken into hundreds of pieces, the reconstruction appears to be remarkably successful.

The shrine, as it appears to-day, is shown in the sketch on these pages. It is difficult to believe that it was once a mass of broken stone.

ST. EDMUNDSBURY ABBEY

EDMUND, who was crowned King of East Anglia on Christmas Day, 856, reigned thirteen years before the great invasion of the Danes, in 869, drove him from Thetford, broke up his kingdom and brought him to a tragic end at Eglesdene, near Hoxne. Oakley Park, near the River Waveney, which divides Norfolk and Suffolk, is supposed to be the site of "Eglesdene." Near by is a bridge over the Dove, a tributary of the Waveney. It is known as "Gold Bridge," and is the successor of the one under whose arch, according to legend, the fugitive king was hiding when a newly-married couple, crossing the bridge by moonlight, caught the glint of his golden spurs in the water and revealed his lurking-place to the enemy. An old legend is still sometimes heard of to the effect that no bridal party dare ever cross a bridge here because Edmund is said to have laid a curse upon any such party. The legend surely is a disservice to the memory of the King and Martyr.

The story tells how the Danes bound him to a tree, beat him with cudgels and then shot him to death with arrows. They then beheaded the body, and threw the head into a thicket of the forest which then covered this region. There, according to the legend, it was discovered by a search-party, attracted to the spot by a voice crying "Here, Here!" Hastening to the place whence the voice proceeded, they discovered a wolf, holding the head in its paws, piously guarding it, in a thicket of thorns. The wolf had lost all its

ferocity, and, allowing the head to be removed, followed until he saw it deposited with the body, when he returned to his coverts, with "doleful moaning." This incident is recorded in stone on a portion of Bishop Northwold's tomb, in Ely Cathedral.

It is a striking instance of the credibility of many ancient legends amongst others that are incredible, that the very tree, an ancient oak, at Hoxne, to which, by immemorial repute, the King had been bound, was found when it fell in 1849 and was cut up, to have embedded in its trunk an arrow-head.

This is not the place in which to tell of the many marvels that followed at the resting-place of Edmund, who was duly canonised ; but, in the year 903, after his body had lain for thirty-three years in a wooden chapel at Hoxne, it was removed to Beodric's Weorth, where it was placed in the church of St. Mary, and became the cause of contention between the regular and the secular canons, until the time came in 1010, when the Danes again overran the country.

The canons then sank their differences and conveyed the precious body of the saint to London for safety. It was escorted back in 1013, resting awhile in the chapel of logs built for it at Greenstead in Essex, some of whose rude logs yet remain in the walls of the Church there. Working many miracles on the way, it was replaced in the church of Beodricsweorth where it remained until Aylwin's great monastic church, begun, under Canute, in 1020, was completed. Already the sainted king had become more powerful than any other miracle-worker, but hitherto his name had not been given to the town, which retained its old style until the time of Edward the Confessor, when first it became known as St. Edmund's Bury.

Here, as everywhere else, the Norman Conquest

meant a great increase of ecclesiastical wealth and power. The monastery was rebuilt, and its Abbot was included among those mitred abbots who sat in Parliament. They were all-powerful within the wide-spreading limits of St. Edmund, and were little less than bishops; sitting, like them, in Parliament. The sanctity and potency of St. Edmund were not less than those of St. Thomas à Becket became in after years at Canterbury. Pilgrims of every estate of the realm flocked to his shrine.

Even kings entered into his courts with humility. Edward the Confessor walked the last mile barefoot. Henry the First, Henry the Second, and Richard the First, were here frequently. Only one Abbey in England, that of Glastonbury, exceeded it in wealth and grandeur.

King John, however, was different. Jocelin of Brakelond, the old monkish chronicler, who was born in the very street of "Short Brakland" we may see in Bury to this day, tells us how, in 1203, the king stayed with the Abbot a whole fortnight, the said Abbot and the monastery being at that time only by way of recovering from much domestic mismanagement by former abbots, and ill-prepared for the costs of such entertaining.

And when at last King John went his ways, and the Abbot expected something kingly, he left merely a handsome silk cloak for St. Edmund, or rather pretended so to leave it, for one of his retinue borrowed it, "and *we*," says Jocelin, "never got sight of it again." And all else the king gave was "one shilling and one penny, to say a mass for him, and so departed—"like a shabby Lackland as he was!" says Carlyle in his *Past and Present*, in which he exploits and enlarges upon the Chronicle of Jocelin and the rule

of Abbots. Thirteenpence sterling ! This was what the convent got from Lackland, for all the victuals that he and his had made away with. “ We, of course, said our mass for him—having covenanted to do it—but let impartial posterity judge with what degree of fervour ! ”

Jocelin the monk’s *Chronicle*, in which, written in monkish Latin, he tells of his hero, Abbot Samson, opens upon the life within a Benedictine monastery at the close of the twelfth century and the opening of the thirteenth, an illuminating and instructive chapter.



ST. EDMUNDSBURY ABBEY

A man of forty-seven years was Samson when he was elected Abbot. Jocelin describes him in loving detail. He was a native of Tottington, in Norfolk, and long had been a monk in St. Edmundsbury Abbey. He was a tall, sturdy man, stout, with a reddish beard, growing grizzled, and with a tonsure which Nature in the course of years had enlarged far beyond that of a monk. A few auburn locks, growing grey, alone were left. At the time when Samson was elected Abbot, the great monastery was suffering from a long

period of neglect, or worse, and it was heavily in debt to both Jews and Christian creditors. The Jews here, as also at Lincoln, at York and Norwich, were prospering exceedingly, in spite of periodical persecutions, and they, like the nobles and the monks, were then the only people below the Sovereign himself, who could afford stone-built houses. Other, and less well-to-do, folk had to be content with timber or timber and plaster houses. At Bury St. Edmunds there yet remains the fine stone-built house of a Jew of this period, comparable with the other and even finer, at Lincoln. It is in the Market Place, and is known as "Moyses' Hall," or "the Jew's House." It is a Late Norman building of flint and stone, with additions made in the fourteenth century.

Abbot Samson had filled most of the offices in the monastery by the time Abbot Hugh had died in 1180; and the choice of his successor was not really in doubt. He had proved himself efficient in all those grades to fulfil his duties and to assure, so far as he was able in any subordinate position less than that of Abbot, efficient management. But none other than one with full authority can command in all things: hence the desperate condition into which the finances of the house had declined. Samson, says Jocelin, was just and businesslike in all things; which, in the already worldly complexion of the monastery, was a greater consideration than holiness or any spiritual qualities; although, to be sure, Jocelin does not hint that he was deficient in these. But what really mattered was that they should have an Abbot who could rule wisely in all the temporal concerns of St. Edmundsbury.

Samson himself made no claim to any especial vocation for the religious life. "If I could have got five or six marks a year," said he, "to keep me in

the schools, I should never have been monk or Abbot." He was by temperament a student, but force of circumstances made him firstly a monk, and then a man of business. How excellent a man of business indeed he was. One of his first acts, after his election, was to send for the Abbey seals, with which all documents were sealed. There were brought to him no fewer than thirty-three. All, save one, of these he broke up : and none henceforward should seal and commit the house save himself.

Jocelin gives us no very favourable opinion of the brethren. They were apt to be idle, scandal-mongers and quarrelsome, and not too eager in their religious duties. He hints he could say more, if he cared, but that to do so would not be wise. When the brethren found they had got Samson as Abbot over them, they discovered he had a keen and stern eye for peccadilloes and all derelictions of duty ; and they grumbled, declaring that rather would they have had another, " if he were not too dissolute." Perhaps they regretted the sacristan known as " William Rufus " because of his red nose, had not been elected. He was a drunkard and a libertine. What went on in his sacristy, Jocelin declares, he did not know (meaning that he knew not what did *not* take place there). At any rate, the stern Abbot Samson not merely deposed the red-nosed sacristan, but also demolished the very sacristy and made the site of it, into a garden. The dissolute sacristan seems to have defiled the building.

In four years from his election Samson had swept away all the accumulated evils and debts. But he had not yet got rid of the presence of the Jews in Bury : A popular uprising and massacre of them on Palm Sunday 1190 gave him an excuse for expelling from the liberties of St. Edmund all who had survived.

Meanwhile, Abbot Samson is employed in many ways strange to us, but a usual part of any great mitred Abbot's career in those times. He is occupied with the conduct of his manors, felling and clearing woodlands and bringing pasture and cornlands into being, to increase the revenues of the monastery. He has, too, to uphold the rights of the house at law against secular and ecclesiastical attempted encroachments, and to keep an eye upon the fifty knights in his service. Jocelin, loving the man, tells us how the years and the cares of his rule turned the Abbot's hair snow-white. In 1198 the Shrine of St. Edmund was nearly burnt: the High Altar being consumed and the Shrine itself escaping as by a miracle. The Abbot thought this to be a judgment upon the brethren, one of whom had a dream in which he saw St. Edmund himself, who declared he was stripped of his garments and was wasted with hunger and cold. Samson interpreting this, says it meant the Saint reproaching the monks for their idleness and their neglect of the poor. "Ye defraud the naked poor of your old clothes, and give with reluctance what ye are bound to give them of meat and drink."

The brethren themselves by no means share this view, and say the Holy Martyr meant to champion themselves, who were kept upon short commons. To this the surrejoinder of my Lord the Abbot is that this judgment by fire is obviously a result of the brethren complaining of their meat and drink.

But, more important than these reproofs and these sullen disagreements is the matter of restoring the Shrine of the Blessed Saint. This is done, with days of public fasting and the transfer of the Saint's body to the new and more gorgeous *loculus*. They, a select number of twelve, at night, the rest of the monastery

being asleep, open the Shrine, and see there the veritable body of the Saintly and the Kingly one. Marvellous, indeed ! Within wrappings of linen and of silk, it is disclosed to the awed Abbot and his brethren, all elaborately enrobed for the occasion. " Over the breast of Edmund there lay, fixed to the surface of the *loculus*, a Golden Angel, about the length of a human foot ; holding in one hand a golden sword, and in the other a banner ; under this was a hole in the lid of the *loculus*."

The Angel is St. Michael. The Abbot and two others alone are privileged to gaze within ; and there was the body, the head united to it and raised a little, with a small pillow. Then Samson the Abbot, takes the head between his hands, he exclaims, groaning : " Glorious Martyr, Holy Edmund, blessed be the hour when thou wert born ! Glorious Martyr, turn it not to my perdition that I have so dared to touch thee, miserable and sinful : thou knowest my devout love, and the intention of my mind." So he touches the eyes, and the very massive and prominent nose, and the breast and arms ; and, raising the left arm, he touches the fingers, and places his own fingers between the sacred fingers. Proceeding, he finds the feet standing stiffly up, like those of a man dead yesterday, and he touches the toes, and counts them, and other brethren are called to see, and others yet come, uninvited.

It was in the following year that Abbot Samson retired awhile to one of his manors, for fear of his younger monks, who, it was suspected, were plotting to murder him with their knives. Returning, he called them before him, and reproving them with tears in his eyes, the incident passed. But still the brethren would have liked better a less admirable man. One

would say : " May the Lord Almighty send us a foolish and unlearned person for our Abbot, that he may be obliged to lean on us for help."

But Samson ruled them long. He reigned thirty years ; until his death in 1211.

Such was the good Abbot Samson. That not every Abbot was of a character so admirable must of course be obvious. But if we wish to have a contrasting shadow to this picture of conscientious duty and of a well-spent life, we have but to turn to the equally authentic chronicles of Evesham Abbey at the same period. Roger Norreis, Abbot of Evesham, contemporary with Abbot Samson, shares with him nothing save the facts that he too was Abbot of one of the greatest Abbeys of England, and that he flourished in exactly the same period. Roger was a scoundrel of the most finished and persistent type, and he wrought as great mischief in his charge as Samson did good in his ; as will be read in these pages, where the story of Evesham Abbey is set forth.

It was in 1205, in the last years of Samson's sway, that the Barons met in the Abbey and swore to wring from King John that ratification of Magna Charta which the King was reluctantly obliged to concede them. This historic incident is recorded on a tablet within the precincts of the Abbey to-day, in some verses which perhaps do not rise to the level the occasion seems to demand. An allusion to this event is found in the motto beneath the town arms : " Sacrarium Regis Cunabula Legis " ; that is to say, " The shrine of the king, the cradle of the law."

But Royal visits continued, and in 1446 Henry the Sixth held a Parliament here.

" St. Edmund is a hard master," was the saying here : for this great and wealthy Benedictine Abbey

was more exacting as a landlord and as owner of the two fairs held in the town than any secular landowner could have been ; and the townsfolk seem to have been regarded by the abbots almost as their chattels. So embittered did affairs become that, in 1327, the people of Bury arose and forcibly entered the monastery and pillaged it. The same happened in 1381, in course of the Peasants' Rebellion under Jack Straw ; and on this occasion the prior, who had fled, was overtaken by the mob and murdered.

The manors and other lands owned by the abbey were so extensive that it has been calculated their present annual value would be £500,000. But in spite of its great revenues, the monastery was always in debt, largely owing to the princely hospitality it dispensed, and to the continual rebuildings.

Little is left to show what the Abbey church and the domestic buildings were like, and in the Botanic gardens and other grounds, which occupy the site, the scanty ruins afford speculative, rather than exact, information. The Abbey Church ground-plan has been traced, by which it appears to have been 505 feet in length ; and the Abbot's Bridge, across the River Lark, to the former vineyards, remains. The two parish churches, those of St. James and St. Mary, although within the Abbey precincts, did not form part of it. St. James' Church is now the cathedral of the newly-constituted diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, formed pursuant to an Order in Council of 1914.

The most imposing group of buildings is that seen facing Angel Hill, where the fairs were held. The Abbey gate is almost perfect. It is an ornate building, erected about 1328, to replace a gate destroyed by the townsfolk in the riots of 1327. It is a beautiful

work, in the Decorated style of Gothic architecture, but it is more than beautiful : it is, or was, a defensible gateway, built after those deeds of violence ; when the monks, greatly concerned to fortify the Abbey, thus contrived not merely beauty but also strength. The several now empty niches once were filled with statues of saints, with arrow-slits between them, and behind. Those who sought to attack the Abbey had not merely the gateway and its portcullis to force, but also to brave flights of arrows from the room over the archway ; and in the last resource the descent of the stone saints upon them, pushed over from their niches by the defenders : Saint Edmund himself perhaps prominent among them, defending his house to the last, but in no miraculous way.

The Norman tower, built in the eleventh century and restored in 1847, formed an approach to the Abbey church. But these imposing entrances to the precincts lead only to scanty ruins and to the secular gardens and residences of to-day.

The Commissioners sent by Henry the Eighth to St. Edmundsbury reported little against the Abbey, save that the Abbot delighted much in playing dice and cards, and that there were a number of superstitious relics ; such as “ the coles that Saint Laurence was tosted withall, the paring of S. Edmundes naylles, S. Thomas of Canterbury penneknyff and his bootes, and divers skulles for the hedache ; peces of the holie crosse, able to make a hole crosse of ” (many cartloads of these all about the country, and more on the Continent) ; “ other reliques for rayne and certain other superstitious usages, for avoyding of wedes growing in corne ; with suche other.”

EVESHAM ABBEY

THE legendary story of the foundation of the once noble Benedictine Abbey of Evesham takes us back to the year 701, when a swineherd in the employ of Ecgwine, Bishop of Worcester, is said to have had a revelation. Eof, for that is the name given to him, plunged into the forest which then overspread the lands beside the river Avon, where the town of Evesham is now, seeking a strayed sow. He not only found that lost member of the herd, but in addition made the discovery of a ruined chapel, the relic of an ancient and forgotten religious house. There, according to the legend, Eof beheld also a vision of the Virgin and a galaxy of attendant saints, singing. Instead of worshipping, he fled, scared almost out of his wits. He reported this strange thing to Bishop Ecgwine, and ventured back only as a guide to him. The Bishop saw the same wonderful sight, and heard the singing.

There could be but one result of this : the founding of a new religious house on the site ; and thus there came into being the monastery of Eof's-hamme, beside the Avon meadows. For one particular meaning of the ancient word " hamme " was a waterside meadow. That, in fact, is the root-meaning of the name of our London suburb, Hammersmith.

However, even in those times of Bishop Ecgwine, when folk were credulous, and disposed to believe in any tale of marvels, this story was too much for digestion, as the Bishop soon found. He seems to

have been so stricken by the scepticism with which it was received that nothing less than a pilgrimage to Rome would ease his mind. His preparations for departure were not such as other travellers would have made. He locked his legs together with chain and padlock, and, having properly secured it, he threw the key into the Avon.

Arrived in Rome (in spite of this amazing impediment) he received a present of a salmon which, when cut open, was found to contain the key. The salmon had swallowed the key, and apparently swum from the Avon across the seas to Italy! This cumulative series of outrages upon common sense then winds up with the legend of how the bells of Rome rang of their own accord. The Pope, we are told, was so impressed by these evidences of Ecgwine's honesty that forthwith he not only conferred many privileges upon the new monastery, but also freed it from the jurisdiction of the Bishops of Worcester. Ecgwine, third Bishop of Worcester, resigned the see to become the first Abbot of Evesham.

In all its long story, the Abbey of Evesham never repudiated these tales of the miraculous, and on its seals the figure of Saint Ecgwine, as he became, persisted, wearing the chain about his legs.

In spite of fire and flood, invasion and even an early confiscation of some of its property, the Abbey grew wealthier and even more influential. Its Abbots were of those great mitred Abbots who sat in Parliament, prone on occasion to anger and violence. Not infrequently they were of the type of Abbot Roger, who in the thirteenth century expended the substance of the Abbey in riotous living, and kept his seventy monks and sixty servants so ill-clothed and fed that they went in rags, and even starved. No bite nor sup for them ;

and when they crawled into the Abbey, the leaky roof poured water on them. Some died for lack of food.

The case of this Abbot, Roger Norreis, is one of the most scandalous in the whole range of monasticism. He was the ineffable knave, the most finished and fully equipped scoundrel in a gallery of such, which itself was not ill-furnished with similar characters. We are not here quoting opinions of a later age, but merely recounting from accessible documents what this Abbot's own monks for years endured, and of what they accused him and so completely proved that, very belatedly, he was deposed and cast forth from his Abbey.

Thomas de Marleberge, who at last brought him down, was one of the monks of Evesham ; and a very wise and patient man. He seems to have been already a man of about middle age when he left the world and became a monk ; bringing with him into the cloister a very complete knowledge of affairs in general, and in particular an intellect trained in civil and canon law. That would be about the year 1200.

Norries had been a monk at Canterbury before royal favour thrust him, unwelcome, upon the brethren of Evesham. Gervase of Canterbury, his contemporary, describes him as he was at Christ Church Priory, in that city :—" From the early days of his monastic life he was proud, arrogant, pompous in word, and treacherous in deed ; greedy of promotion, a scorner of the monastic rule, fawning on his superiors, and contemptuous of his inferiors, ostentatious in dress, negligent in observances of the Order, a friend of women and a lover of horses, wrathful in rebuke, a ready backbiter and incorrigible at every point."

The Archbishop, Baldwin, made this man of whom so damning a portrait was drawn, Prior. He so mis-

managed at Canterbury that his monks rebelled against him, and even thrust him into the Priory prison. From this he escaped by the extremely undignified means of the sewer.

From this strange escapade he was afterwards known at Canterbury as "Roger of the Jakes," and life there became impossible for him. Nothing is so fatal as ridicule. So he was transferred to Evesham, much to the indignation and consternation of the monks there, in 1191 as Abbot. The Abbey was at that time in an exceptionally prosperous condition ; the Abbot, Adam, who had recently died, having been alike a most religious and prudent head. Roger's evil reputation had gone before him, and the monastery at Evesham was rightly alarmed. Giraldus Cambrensis is another witness to the character of this undesirable. "Nurture in idleness and pleasure, he was not exempt from those vices which almost always attach themselves to the wealthy : to wit, pride and lechery. But as this Roger's vice of pride and wantonness grew upon him, to most monstrous proportions, he scoured all the villages and hamlets and manors of the Abbey like a stallion neighing after every mare, and so perniciously gave rein to every enticement of lustful pleasure, laying no bridle upon his sensual impulses, that (according to the true report of his neighbours), he is said to have begotten eighteen or more children of each sex, with grievous scandal, as one who feared neither God nor man, so that in him there seemed to be fulfilled the words of that pagan poet who satirised such follies : 'Nothing was safe from this man's lust, not the high-born matron, etc'."

Thomas de Marleberge's *Chronicle* thus takes up the tale of Roger. "Roger himself often used to say, concerning his entrance among us, that the lord King

(Richard the First) had given him this Abbey for his services, which was to say: 'I came not into the sheepfold through the door, but by other ways'; and in truth he was not asked for by any Chapter, as canon law prescribes. This Abbot made a magnanimous show, and seemed to abound in much knowledge of letters, for he was ready of speech and of great eloquence. Moreover, he was very courtly and free-handed, and boastful at table, abounding richly in food and drink, and he distributed these things copiously and honourably to whomsoever and whensoever he would, striving to conceal beneath this cloak not the soldiership of Christ (as St. Sebastian did), but his own disorders. For he was violent and lecherous above all monks in England, although he confessed himself not for a monk, and would not concede that simple fornication was a mortal sin (whereby he seduced women) unless incest or adultery be added thereto—though he himself, men said, stuck neither at this nor at that. And we ourselves know that these things are partly true, yet we restrain our pen, God knoweth, for reverence of the Order."

After a few years this extraordinary Abbot became "elated with such pride that he seemed almost mad in his great lavishness, and abjured the Church, the Chapter-house, the care of souls, and the observances of our Order almost altogether." He despised and insulted the brethren, calling them "puppies," "vassals," and "ribalds." And, continues Marleberge, "if they ever murmured at their insufficient food, he called them his menials, to whom he would give what he pleased, and (as if to excuse his own crime) he called them all whoremongers."

Roger wasted the properties and the revenues of the Abbey on his own personal extravagances, so

that necessary things soon were lacking. "At one time he so despoiled us of the Chamberlain's rents that many brethren, for want of frocks, were long unable to attend in Choir or Chapter, while others, still worse, for lack of cowls and breeches, could neither celebrate Mass, nor come in among the brethren. Moreover, we lived many days on bare bread and water, and many days we had only hard bread with beer that was scarce more than water, and no pittances."

A "pittance" was an *ex gratia* allowance, either in quantity or quality, permitted on occasion; but it could not be claimed as of right.

Meanwhile, Roger was building manor-houses at Badby, Bradwell and Bourton, "noble buildings," where he lived three months at a time, "and here he revelled in gluttony and wantonness. . . . But we at Evesham (God be my witness!) would fain have filled our bellies with the coarser bread that his servants did eat; and no man gave unto us." Complaint was made to the Archbishop of Canterbury, then Papal legate, and for a time restitution was made. But this lasted only a year, when affairs grew worse than before; the Abbot having by lavish hospitality among the great ones of the land, gained their ear and countenance. He threw out some of the monks, and procured his servants to lay violent hands upon others. A few he corrupted by gifts and special favours. The others again wrote to the Archbishop, with but little result. The Bishop of Winchester, however, wrote saying he would make a visitation; whereupon some of the Abbot's corrupted monks who, says Marleberge "had grown rotten with him in their doings, like the sow that walloweth in the mire," urged that it would be well to receive this domiciliary visit with humility: others, however, protesting, even with tears, that to

do so would be to renounce the wholly independent position to which the Abbey had attained, that of a mitred Abbey, owning allegiance to no see. The Bishop, for some reason, having put off his projected visit, the Abbot retired to his manor of Bradwell. After a time my lord Bishop of Winchester came, and found the Abbot not at Evesham and the Abbey guesten-house locked against him and his suite ; the whole monastery having by this time joined in a bitter protest, against any attempt, on whatever pretence, to interfere with its independence. The Bishop, with all his retinue and other Bishops, proceeded to the Abbey church, and sat by the high altar, where Marleberge, at the head of his fellow-monks, insisted he should depart ; as their quarrels were no concern of his, but only of the Pope or his legate. The Bishop asked if he were being threatened, and Marleberge replied that he was ; the Bishop then solemnly excommunicated and damned the whole community, suspending them from their offices : and so departed. But the services of the Abbey went on, in spite of those episcopal lightnings and thunders. As for Marleberge, he went to see the Abbot, who had withdrawn himself in advance to his manor of Bradwell. In this matter of standing firm for the independence of their Abbey, the Abbot should have been grateful, but gratitude was not one of his qualities. He declared he would not speak with one who was excommunicated ; and so in disgust Marleberge went off, to the Chamberlain's manor at Sewell. There he considered some excuse or explanation, might be found of this conduct of the Abbot. He might, thought Marleberge, with a curious kind of perverted charity, have been drunk, as was his daily habit, or he might have had with him one of his Concubines " on whose

account he had often been wont to exclude us from his chamber ; although it was also his habit to have his concubines haunting his rooms promiscuously, under our eyes."

Marleberge set off for London, and on the way met the Archbishop, to whom he told all these matters. The Archbishop swore by St. Julian he would not lose his rights as official visitor of Evesham to any other Bishop, and bade Marleberge in five days appear before him at Worcester. Litigation then began ; the Bishop of Worcester seeking to recover the overlordship of Evesham which many years before the See of Worcester had lost. The case dragged on : remitted to Lincoln, and then to London, with varying results. It was like cases in the secular courts of to-day : appeals from one authority to another and higher. The Bishop of Worcester appealed to Rome, the final arbiter ; and Thomas de Marleberge went there, to conduct the case of the Abbey. All minor internal domestic differences now were sunk in this tremendous fight for independence ; and Thomas departed in tears, swearing he would never return or see their faces again, save in the Kingdom of Heaven, if he were unsuccessful. He would retire, in that event, to a monastery in Rome, and there die. So passionately was he convinced of the justice of their cause that he considered the loss of it would be the damnation of their souls. More than a little hysterical, these tears and these convictions, we may think. At Rome he pleaded before the Pope, Innocent the Third ; and at Rome he remained for over a year and a half, arguing and contending with all the wiles of the lawyer he was. Roger, the Abbot, was there too : both these enemies joined in accord over the greater issue. The Abbot indeed had suffered imprisonment at Châlons on the

way, on an accusation of which Thomas tells us vaguely, but does not specify, because as he says, he did not wish to create scandal. Yet, even in Rome, he went in fear of the Abbot, as he had done at Evesham, where he was threatened with prison, in which he suspected the Abbot would have murdered him. Here, too, Thomas expected even that; and took precautions accordingly.

At last, April 6th, 1206, the Pope gave judgment in favour of Evesham Abbey, and Thomas was so overcome with joy that he had to be assisted out of the presence of His Holiness.

But the Pope and his Cardinals wanted the gifts then customary from successful litigants. Rome will have its tribute! Because Thomas, having expended all his money, had nothing to bestow, the Pope forbade his departure, and it became necessary secretly to convey the judgment home, out of Italy. One of the monks who had accompanied him was therefore to feign illness, and so get away with the documents. It was successfully accomplished. Then Thomas, as one attending a great public function at which the Pope blessed everyone indiscriminately, got away; and so came home.

The independence of the Abbey having been gained, the evil Abbot thought himself secure in his old ways; not thinking of the Pope's legate, who had the right of visitation, and of deposing an Abbot, if he found cause. He revoked all concessions that had been wrung from him. Thirty of the monks revolted, broke the Abbey seal, or buried it, and, leaving the aged and infirm brethren behind, left the Abbey, under the eyes of the Abbot. He collected some sympathisers, who intercepted them on Wickwar Hill and bade them return. When they refused, these armed men

drew their swords and attacked the monks, who replied with their staves and actually drove off the enemy. They went on their way, but the Abbot, now somewhat alarmed, overtook them, and promised redress ; so that, although not without some distrust, they returned.

They did well to distrust him, for he had no idea of keeping his bond ; and the lot of the brethren was worse than ever. For five years he revelled in ex-



THE BELL-TOWER, EVESHAM ABBEY

travagance and wickedness and the monks suffered cold and hunger and nakedness ; while the Abbey fell into disrepair, with roofs leaking and the revenues made away with. At last, in September 1213 there came back to England, Pandulf the Papal legate, and Thomas de Marleberge hastened to the Archbishop, to seek that dignitary's help, to make a visitation, and finally to depose the Abbot. He returned with His Grace of Canterbury and the Dean of Salisbury, and while on the way, at Oxford, he was summoned into

the presence of the Legate, who was extremely indignant. "Miserable wretch!" he exclaimed, "wherefore hast thou freed thine Abbey to the secular authority, if thou dost not free it from servitude to the devil?"

He was unjust enough to accuse Thomas of collusion with the Abbot, "who is a scandal to the whole monastic Order. By St. Peter, we will come unto thee with the rod of fury; and we will begin by punishing thee for thy concealing of these things."

So he was dismissed to his Abbey, with the promise that the legate duly would make his visitation. When the Abbot heard of the legate's coming, he accused Thomas of plotting against him, and so threatened him that again he feared, as he says, for his life.

The visitation was held, and the Abbot and his accusers, Thomas de Marleberge chief among them, were confronted in the chapter-house. The accusations were made at great length, and the Abbot was invited to reply. His answer was not convincing, and the legate, commanding him to rise, deposed him from his office. "And seeing that he rose not at this command, he again commanded him to arise and beg for release from his office. So he then rose and fell upon the floor, and repeated the words which the legate had put into his mouth and enjoined upon him."

Thus, with many ceremonies, was Abbot Roger deprived, and made to restore properties he had designed to make away with. "He had frequently confessed he had purposed to burden this house with debts in so far as he could and that he would pledge all that he could of the Abbey's privileges and ornaments, and when he had sucked everything, so far as he was able, into that gulf of his, then he would quit

the place, lest he should die and be buried among us dogs (for so he was wont to call us). And thus he did in truth foretell his own evil end."

Christian forgiveness, however, a good deal in excess, as well we may consider, led the brethren to petition the legate to confer upon the Abbot they so happily, but belatedly, had been freed from, the small Priory of Penwortham, in Lancashire, near Preston. We may pause a moment, to wonder what that Priory had done, to deserve this. But Penwortham soon was ridden of him; for in five months he was deprived of this also. Roger then went to Rome, having no doubt seen so much ill conduct there that he considered it a likely place for him. But he was unsuccessful. Coming back to England, he took office with the Bishop of Worcester, considering that by so doing he might inflict some harm yet upon the Abbey of Evesham. Five years passed, and then the legate, Pandulf, pitying the rogue (but without considering the Priory) gave him back Penwortham. For six years he was Prior, and in that time he embezzled nearly all its revenues. He died and was buried there; but the monks of Evesham, large-hearted in sympathy for a scoundrel, performed for the rest of that erring soul the full offices of the Church.

The virtuous, long-suffering and able Thomas, wisest of monks, from being Prior, became Abbot of Evesham, and during his abbacy fully restored its broken fortunes; dealing in a businesslike way—and a hard and grasping way too—with its dependents and tenants; which was accounted in those times, among the religious, as a virtue beyond the price even of godliness.

New architectural glories were added to the Abbey, after this recovery. Even at the last, when, under

Henry the Eighth, the dissolution of the monasteries was impending, more building was in progress.

Abbot Lichfield, last of the long line of Abbots, then ruled, and was building the Bell Tower, which almost alone remains of that stately establishment. The Abbey church, 350 feet in length, and with many chantries and chapels, filled with the tombs of generations of benefactors, was destroyed in almost the completest manner. Not even the great Abbey of St. Edmundsbury vanished so utterly as did this of Evesham. Leland, writing in 1540, only six years after the dissolution, remarked with astonishment : " Gone, a mere heap of ruins."

The two churches which the visitor sees near the site of the vanished Abbey are ancient and of its own time, but they were, and are, parochial. They are the churches of St. Lawrence and All Saints.

At the Battle of Evesham, fought at Greenhill, on the road to Worcester, August 4th, 1265, fell the great patriot, Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, leader of the Barons in the popular cause against Henry the Third. He and his men were at worship in the Abbey, before the battle. In their defeat they were nearly all slain. De Montfort was buried before the High Altar of the Abbey church ; and thousands afterwards prayed there, for that great man was a friend of the people. Miracles were recorded, or alleged, at the spot, and the Abbey church benefited by the offerings of the pilgrims. But all these historic shrines were ruthlessly and entirely without sentiment swept away when the Abbey was dissolved ; and it was only in recent years that a granite cross was set up marking the spot near where Simon de Montfort's body was laid.

THE ABBEY OF ST. HILDA, WHITBY

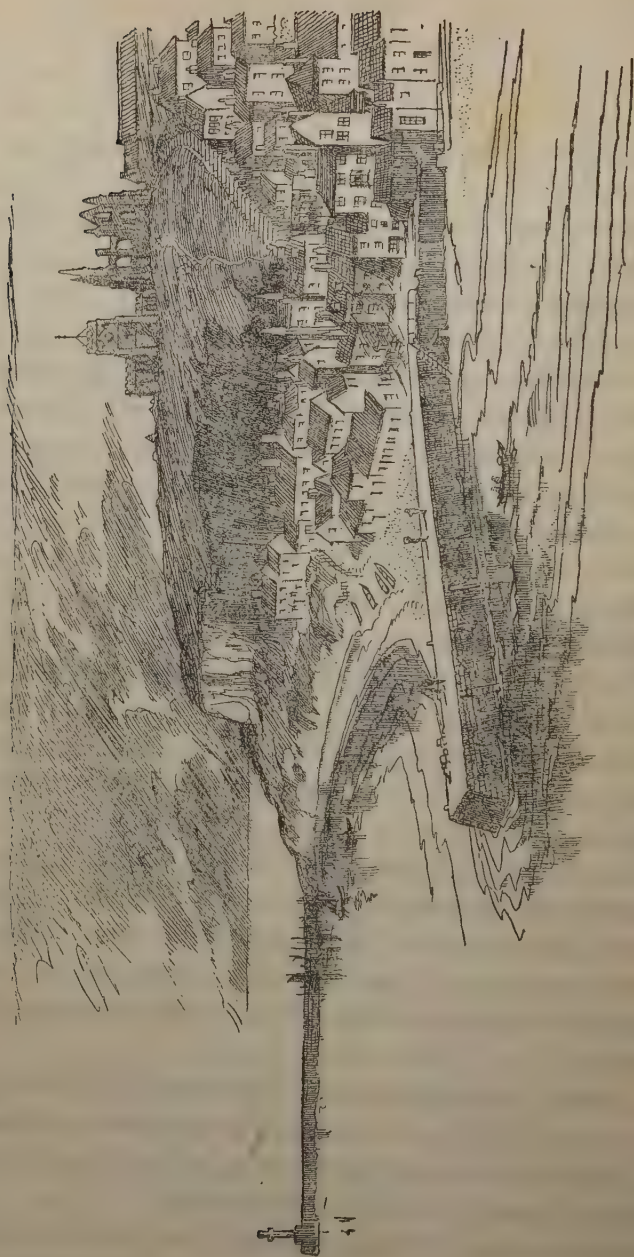
HIGH up on the windy down of the East Cliff at Whitby, overlooking the sea and the harbour, down whose picturesque gorge runs the river Esk, stands the great ruined Abbey of St. Hilda. It is an unusual situation for an abbey. Mostly we find them in sheltered spots, in secluded vales where the winds are hushed, and where the religious could have gardens and orchards. But here, on the hill-top above Whitby, the scene is stark and must once have been extremely harsh.

Every storm blows about the abbey ruins as though it would throw them down, but the builders wrought too well for tempests to prevail, and there the great roofless abbey church yet stands ; and since the repairers of His Majesty's Office of Works have been busy here, it is likely to stand for many generations to come.

The Princess Hilda, who founded this Abbey of Streonshalh, as originally it was named, was dedicated to the religious life by her father, Oswy, King of Northumbria, as a sop to Providence, in A.D. 658, before the Battle of Winwidfeld, with the pagan King Penda.

It was a bid for victory. He won that battle, and the Lady Hilda, not resentful of being thus disposed of (she then was forty-four years of age), accordingly devoted herself to piety and seclusion.

Her monastery was a mixed one for nuns and monks, and her first church was a sufficiently humble one of



WHITBY

timber, but soon it grew in wealth and importance. Hilda died as first abbess in A.D. 680, and was succeeded by the Princess Ethelfleda, who died in A.D. 713.

It was under the rule of Hilda that a synod was held here at which occurred a much-heated discussion between Colman, a northern bishop, and Wilfrid (afterwards St. Wilfrid), as to the proper time for the observance of Easter. In Scotland it was held agreeably to the decision of St. Columba; and in the south according to the practice of Rome. Eventually the synod decided to adopt the procedure of Rome, holding that St. Peter was greater than Columba.

But the great figure of Whitby Abbey is not so much Hilda as Cædmon, who has been described as "the father of English poetry."

Hilda's piety is said to have inspired the poor peasant, Cædmon, whose occupation was that of tending cattle. However that may be, the herdsman, who was in the service of the abbey, probably as a lay brother, seems to have shown some intellectual gifts beyond the usual run, so that the abbess noticed him (the elderly man as then he was), and bade him assume the garb of one of her community and exercise the gift of poetry he had shown.

Legends, of course, give a more mystical complexion to the discovery of the herdsman's talent. They tell us that, when evenings were come and the servants of the abbey had gathered together, after their labours in field and stall, each took it in turn to sing to the harp. But Cædmon, ashamed that he could not sing, slunk away to his cattle-shed, where, musing sadly, there appeared to him one who said, "Sing to me!" "I cannot sing," answered Cædmon. "Sing," repeated the vision. "Sing of the Creation." And the unlettered herdsman thereupon sang, in the Saxon

language, a metrical paraphrase of large portions of the Scriptures, which at that time were, in written form, only in Latin.

The plain truth of it would seem to be that the simple peasant received education in the monastery and then wrote a version in the common speech of the folk of that age translated and paraphrased from the Latin scripts he had studied.

He produced not merely a translation but a poetic paraphrase of great originality.

A cross some twenty feet in height was in 1898 erected in the churchyard of St. Mary's, Whitby, adjoining the abbey, in memory of Cædmon. It is designed and sculptured after the manner of the crosses set up in his age, and bears the inscription, "To the glory of God, in memory of Cædmon, the father of English song. Fell asleep hard by, 680."

Hilda's monastery later became a Benedictine house of monks. It was rebuilt on a vastly larger scale in the Early English period, and lasted, with later renovations, until, with the reign of Henry VIII, it fell in the general suppression.

The fabric remained long in fairly good preservation, but at last those tempests, to which its exposed situation made the ancient walls susceptible, began to wreak havoc. The west front fell in November, 1794, and, curiously enough, on an exceptionally still day, June 25th, 1830, the tower fell.

Finally, during the Great War, 1914-18, considerable damage was done by long-range enemy bombardments. This has lately been repaired.

The total length of the Abbey Church of St. Peter and St. Hilda was 300 feet. The works now completed have levelled the ground and cleared away heaps of

fallen stones, many of these having been replaced in their former positions.

Legends still tell of the lost bells of Whitby Abbey, an exceptionally fine peal, and greatly coveted when the monastery was dissolved. They were shipped for some distant port, but were wrecked outside the harbour on a reef called "The Scar."

At times of storm, so goes the story, the bells may yet be heard tolling beneath the waves ; but it is an ominous sound for the mariners' ears, for it is said to foretell shipwreck.

The very large Church of St. Mary, which groups so finely with the abbey ruins and looks at a distance to be a part of them, was built originally about 1100 by Abbot William de Percy, as a parish church, and as such it still remains. The abbots could not permit that the growing town of Whitby should use the monastic abbey church.

The approach alike to church and abbey from the harbour is picturesque and exhausting, up a flight of 199 stone steps. Between 1695 and 1818 the many galleries which render the interior of St. Mary's the most quaintly ugly interior in England, were built.

FOUNTAINS ABBEY

YORKSHIRE is a region of abbeys. That shire of the Three Ridings and the many broad acres (there are more acres in Yorkshire than there are letters—not words—in the Bible : 3,882,851 acres, and 3,566,482 letters ; a surprising fact) contains the ruins of about twelve abbeys. Among these Fountains Abbey is the largest and the most supremely beautiful. Indeed, for the extent of these noble ruins, for their beauty, and for the grace and charm of the scenery in which they are placed, Fountains has no peer.

Little more than two miles shall we go from Ripon to find this gracious scene. The abbey is visited from the park of Studley Royal, which is daily open to the public. In the south-eastern corner of the splendid park of Studley Royal, romantically situated beside the river Skell, in a narrow, richly-wooded vale, the ruined abbey rises, more like an abbey of dream than of reality.

The approach through the park is one of extreme beauty. It goes by way of a long and stately avenue of limes, towards whose extremity the spire of the modern church of Studley, built by Lady Ripon in 1871, is seen. The lime avenue is succeeded by one of beeches, leading to the river Skell.

Beside the Skell is "Robin Hood's Well," by tradition the spot where Robin, strong and lithe man though he was, met the "Curtal Friar" and fought with him until the Friar proved himself the better man and threw Robin into the river.

The ballads of Robin Hood and his merry men are instinct with all the fine free love of the countryside of an earlier and simpler England than our own. You can in them hear the summer breezes and see the noble trees and the flowers and grass of the hills and dales.

Robin said, in the ballad, he would like to see one who could shoot an arrow to match with Will Scaldlock ; to which Will replied there was a Curtal Friar in Fountains Abbey who could well match him :—

“ That curtal friar in Fountains Abbey
Well can a strong bow draw ;
He will beat you and your yeomen,
Set them all in a row.”

So Robin, arming himself, went to Fountains Dale and

“ There he was aware of a curtal friar,
Walking by the waterside.”

The friar was an unusual kind of a person, quite apart from the extreme unlikelihood of any friar being in Fountains Abbey at all ; for friars and monks were antagonistic. ‘ Curtal ’ in this ballad is of uncertain meaning ; but it probably meant a friar with a short frock. This strange friar, however, was a warlike person :—

“ The friar had on a harness good
And on his head a cap of steel,
Broadsword and buckler by his side,
And they became him well.

Robin Hood lighted off his horse,
And tied him to a thorn ;
‘ Carry me over the water, thou curtal friar,
Or else thy life’s forlorn.’

The Curtal friar took Robin Hood on his back,
Deep water he did bestride,
And spake neither good word nor bad,
Till he came to the other side.

Lightly leapt Robin off the friar's back,
The friar said to him again,
Carry me over this water, fine fellow,
Or it shall breed thy pain ! ”

And so Robin carried him across, and twice again
they crossed in this manner ; but in the middle of
the second crossing the friar threw Robin in :—

“ And choose thee, choose thee, fine fellow,
Whether thou wilt sink or swim.”

Robin waded ashore, and presently they fought with
swords. Robin was stricken to his knees, and craved
the boon of blowing three blasts on his horn. To his
call came half a hundred of his outlaws. Then the
curtal friar craved the boon of three whistles. To
them came half a hundred good ban-dogs, who tore
off Robin's coat of Lincoln green. Then Little John
with bow and arrows slew half a score of them. The
curtal friar by this time had taken enough of fighting,
and said to Little John :—

“ Hold thy hand, good fellow ;
Thy master and I will agree ;
And we will have new orders taken,
With all the haste that maybe.

And it was suggested that the friar should join the out-
laws' band :

‘ If thou wilt forsake fair Fountains Dale,
And Fountains Abbey free,

Every Sunday throughout the year,
A noble shall be thy fee.'

' And every holy day throughout the year,
Changed shall thy garments be,
If thou wilt go to fair Nottingham,
And there remain with me.'

The curtal friar had kept Fountains Dale
Seven long years or more ;
There was neither knight, lord, nor earl
Could make him yield before."

The peasant or folk origin of these lines, and indeed of all the Robin Hood ballads is self-evident. They are uncouth and to a certain degree inconsequent, and abound in lack of scansion and in the horrible vice of the false rhyme. They are, in short, wholly unliterary ; but from amidst all their rough-hewn sequences there peeps out, as already noted, an endearing love of the country.

The great and magnificent Cistercian Abbey of Fountains began in a small way, in circumstances of poverty and distress. It was founded in a secession from the Benedictine Abbey of St. Mary at York, whose lovely ruins are yet to be seen, situated close by the railway-station ; an ironic neighbourhood, in the changes of time, for a mediæval religious house. It was in 1130-32 that thirteen among the brethren of St. Mary's, including the Prior, dissatisfied with the laxity of life in that establishment, " separated themselves from the rest, as the fat is cut away from the lean "—in the words of one of these dissatisfied brethren, historian of the early history of Fountains. They went forth, taking away " nothing forth from the goods of the Abbey, save their frocks only." The

Prior gave the reasons for this exodus, in his description of the conduct of the brethren at St. Mary's. "While some," he said, "go to church, others on the other hand withdraw themselves for jesting and useless babble and confabulation, as though the evil of the day were not sufficient, unless night should have her superadded Evil also." Archbishop Thurstan, that forceful archiepiscopal dignitary of York, man of war as also of religion, as many of the prelates then were (he fought with and prevailed against the Scots in



ST. MARY'S ABBEY, YORK

the Battle of the Standard, near Northallerton, in 1138), in reporting this monastic cleavage to the Archbishop of Canterbury, added that the Prior had "many things concerning their irregularities in food, their sweet and solemn potations turn by turn, and the price and delicacy of their garments." "We are all covetous," added the Prior, "and angry and quarrelsome; we take that which is another's, we demand our own in the law-courts, we defend fraud, and lies, we follow after the flesh and the lusts thereof. We live for ourselves

and our own pleasures, we fear to be overcome, and glory in overcoming ; we avoid oppression, yet oppress our neighbours ; we envy others, boast and rejoice in our own prosperity, fattening on other men's sweat, while the whole world is not enough for our malice."

Thus early had the rule of St. Benedict decayed at St. Mary's.

Quarrels and violence formed the daily round in that house of religion ; and the objectors, hoping to live a quiet and simple life elsewhere, proposed to leave. The Abbot, for his part, proposed to excommunicate them ; or, alternatively to forbid their departure. He varied from severity to expostulation, saying he could not change the conduct of the Abbey, as long established. At last, the Archbishop, invoked in the contention, came, and saw for himself. With him he brought seven dignified clergy, as assessors. They assembled in the Chapter-house, amid such "din and confusion" (as the Archbishop himself wrote) "that it was more like unto the seditious raging of drunken and riotous men than unto monastic humility—whereof indeed there was at this time no sign." The secessionists were threatened with violence, and they were threatened with being dragged into the prison cells with which most monasteries were furnished, even in the presence of the Archbishop ; "Having no other hope of escape, they cast their arms about me, beseeching my protection and that of St. Peter ; and thus we came with difficulty into the church, while the rest followed us, even there, raging and crying aloud, 'Seize the rebels, lay hands upon the traitors !'"

Thurstan, seeing how serious the position was, conveyed the Prior and the twelve brethren away with him, to his palace. Writing to the Archbishop of

Canterbury, he said, "The Abbot of St. Mary's and his monks ought herein at least to imitate the Egyptians and Babylonians, who permitted the Children of Israel to depart unto the Land of Promise." He added, "we should not judge these men as deserters, but rather as useful ministers, who leave a place where the liberty of sin is too large, and who desire to serve God in greater safety."

Thus these brethren departed. Thurstan gave them "a farmstead, with the fields thereunto appertaining, in the wild region of Skeldale; and into those wilds, carrying with them nothing, they departed. It was winter. Hardness was a part of their vocation, as they conceived it. They had an ideal before them; to be as pure in heart and as simple in life as then were the monks of the Cistercian Abbey of Rievaulx. None helping them, they came into the savage rocky vale that then was the valley of the Skell. It was a lonely and forbidding spot they found. Arriving, their first act was to elect Richard the Prior as their Abbot of the house of *Fontes*, or *De Fontibus*. They lay the first night and for many after under the shelter of an elm-tree in the valley. It still sheltered them in the summer, when it was pleasant and grateful in the shade, after the strenuous labours of the day in felling trees, cutting brushwood, bringing the savage soil under cultivation, and building their first monastery and church of wood. "Hungry they went to table, and weary to rest; never sated with food, yet never murmuring. No sign of sadness was to be seen, no voice of complaint, but they blessed God in all cheerfulness, poor in worldly goods, but strong in faith. In that place no man ate the bread of idleness."

There were, however, two weak brethren who repented of their choice; brothers Ralph and Gervase;

and they went back to St. Mary's and the fleshpots and soft living. Gervase came back again, but Ralph was a lost soul : they saw him no more. Bernard, that great figure of the Cistercian order, the " St. Bernard " of after years, himself sent them a missionary, one Geoffrey, an aged man, from Clairvaux, to instruct them in the Cistercian rule ; and so was Fountains Abbey fully founded.

Ten enthusiastic folk, drawn alike from the Church and the world, joined them, but they brought nothing save their enthusiasm ; and soon a great trial descended upon them. A season of scarcity set in, and their crops, scanty at the best, failed. Their Abbot roamed from place to place, begging food for them, and none would give. They were reduced to living on leaves and herbs cooked and eaten with a little salt. After two years, the position had grown so desperate that the Abbot travelled to Clairvaux and besought Bernard, founder of the Cistercian Order, but not yet of the hierarchy of saints, to receive them there. Fountains in fact, was about to be abandoned altogether, but the situation was at that moment saved by Hugh, Dean of York joining their community at Fountains, with all his worldly goods, and a goodly store of money. The tide had now completely and dramatically turned. A Canon of York Cathedral died, leaving Fountains his sole beneficiary, and Serlo, another joined them. By the close of the fifth year after its establishment, Fountains was well endowed, and was given a more favourable site in the valley than that it had first occupied. Meanwhile, Richard, the first Abbot, died at Rome, and was buried there, and was succeeded by another Richard.

But fate had not yet dealt all its early hard blows. Eight years after their first coming into this vale,

their first Abbey was destroyed by fire. Yet even this was what is called a " blessing in disguise ". That was an Abbey of timber ; and the destruction of it raised up more and greater benefactors, and a newer monastery and Abbey church of stone were possible. Meanwhile, the second Richard had died, at Clairvaulx, in 1143, and Henry Murdac, then at Clairvaulx, was nominated in his place.

Henry Murdac, third Abbot of Fountains, was the centre of a prolonged ecclesiastical storm. When the forceful Thurstan, Archbishop of York, died, the Chapter at York at first chose Henry Selby, Abbot of Fécamp, to succeed him, but as he would not relinquish that Norman abbey, the choice had again to be made, and fell upon William Fitzherbert, 1142. The Pope, Eugenius the Third, refused to accept the election, on the ground that the King, Stephen, had, with Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, procured it ; Fitzherbert being their nephew. Fitzherbert journeyed to Rome and returned ; and the dispute raged long and bitterly. In 1147 the Pope suspended him ; and, as a friend of St. Bernard and a violent partisan of the Cistercians, favoured the election of Murdac of Fountains. This choice galled the Fitzherbert faction to such fury that they set out from York and arrived at Fountains, an armed band, determined to burn down the Abbey and murder the Abbot. They burst in the doors of the monastery, swarmed into the church, and set fire to the domestic buildings. Meanwhile, the terror-stricken Abbot was lying on his face before the High Altar, praying. Let us not believe prayers are unheard or unheeded. Amidst all these alarms and excursions, the Abbot, lying flat there, was not noticed. " Manus enim Domini protexit," says the monkish chronicler of all these things. These two

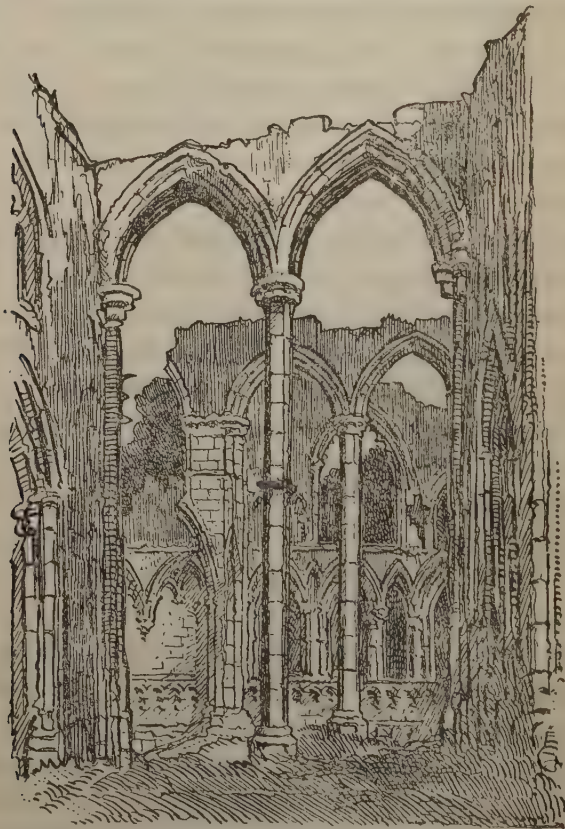
ecclesiastics, fiercely contending together, are spectacles to wonder at : Murdac excommunicating Fitzherbert, and Fitzherbert, replying with a counter excommunication.

Murdac, however, became Archbishop of York, and so remained for five years or more. He died at Beverley in 1153. He was a man deeply religious, and with an ascetic habit, and a stern sense of duty. In his time and under his successors the Abbey prospered, and the damage done by the riotous descent upon it was made good.

So early as this period Fountains was strong enough to send forth colonies to furnish new Abbeys. From Fountains were furnished the Abbeys of Kirkstall, Woburn, Lisa, in Norway, Meaux, in Yorkshire, and Vaudey, or Vallis Dei, in Lincolnshire.

To Abbot Robert of Pipewell, apparently, are due those earlier Early English portions of Fountains, the refectory, and calefactory. He died in 1179. To John of York, 1203-1211 ; John Pherd, 1211-1220 ; and John of Kent, 1220-1247, three successive Abbots of Fountains, is due the rebuilding of the Norman choir and what well was styled the "glorious consummation"; the beautiful Chapel of the Nine Altars, exquisite even in its roofless ruined condition. All these great and costly works illustrate how rapidly the early poverty but rich spirituality of the monks of Fountains had brought abundant fruit of endowments to the monastery. They had by that time all been laid to their rest, and their original humility and simplicity had given place to wealth and pride. Even the extortions practised upon the Abbey by King John, when it was obliged to render 1200 marks (equivalent to some £12,000 to-day), did not hinder these architectural magnificences. Wealth, however, was to bring its own

peculiar Nemesis. Less than a century later, in 1294, the Abbey was in debt, owing to mismanagement, or worse. In the general decline in piety and simplicity of all the religious houses, which set in round about the opening of the thirteenth century, Fountains shared.



CHAPEL OF THE NINE ALTARS, FOUNTAINS ABBEY

In the midst of the fourteenth century, the Abbey's fortunes still were low, even though its endowments were further enriched. The extravagance and lavish expenditure of its Abbots affected the general conduct, and nine of the Abbey granges were found then to be in a ruinous condition.

But the Abbey buildings continued to grow in magnificence. Many high personages purchased, by large donations, the right of sepulture there. Enriched and favoured by Popes and princes, Fountains became one of the wealthiest monasteries in the kingdom.

Long before the actual suppression of the religious houses, it became evident to the Abbots and monks that the end of their day was drawing nigh. Although a great body of public opinion was still well-disposed towards them, and although they, collectively, had become more than ever powerful, as the greatest land-owners in the realm, yet the signs were unmistakable to the discerning that the close of monasticism was drawing nigh. The suppression of the smaller religious houses by Cardinal Wolsey, for the purpose of using their endowments for educational purposes was seen to be not merely a dangerous precedent, but one which logically must lead to the suppression of all. That being so, not a few among the Abbots embarked in those last decades upon a programme of rebuilding and additions which would leave the less to the spoiler when he should come. At Fountains the last architectural adornment, the tower, probably was suggested by these considerations. It was added in the years 1494-1526 by Abbot Marmaduke Huby, whose initials occur upon it. This great tower, occupying an unusual position, at the extremity of the north transept, is 116 feet 6 inches in height, and forms the most outstanding feature in any view of the Abbey ruins. Apart from the significance of it being built in those ultimate years, it illustrates how far behind had been left the stern and simple ideals of the founders of the Cistercian order, which had long before then given place to magnificence and the pride of the eye. The Early Cistercians deprecated ostentation in the building

and furnishing of their Abbeys. No towers were allowed : they were considered to be vain and useless extravagances ; and sculptured work and other enrichments of their buildings were not permitted. The Cross prominently displayed in all Abbey churches, of whatever Order, and generally lavishly enriched with gold and silver and set with precious stones, was in the early Cistercian practice merely of plain rough wood. Thus it is that, when we visit any Cistercian Abbey which has retained its Early English buildings, we shall find the architecture to be of a restrained and almost severe character, but perhaps for that reason the more beautiful. Its beauty is that of just proportions, unspoiled by overloading with decoration ; it is the highest form of art.

The last but one of the Abbots of Fountains, William Thirsk, resigned in 1535, at the visitation of his Abbey by the King's Commissioners, whose correspondence is still preserved. They bring charges of the most serious kinds against him.

The King's Commissioners, Drs. Layton and Legh, coming to Fountains and enquiring into the doings of the Abbot, William Thirsk, wrote to Cromwell :—

“ Pleasit your mastershippe to understande, thabbot of Fontance hath so gretly dilapidate his howse, wastede ther wooddes, notoriously kepyng vj. hoores, diffamede, here *a toto populo*, one day denying thes articles with many mo, the next day folowyng the same confessyng, thus manifestely incurryng perjurie. vj. days before our accesse to his monasterie he committede thefft and sacrilege, confessyng the same. At mydnyght caused his chapelaine to stele the sextens keis, and towke owte a jewel, a crosse of golde with stones. One Warren, a goldsmith of the Chepe, was with hym

in his chambre at that owre, and ther they stole owte a gret emerade with a rubie ; the saide Warren made thabbot believe the rubie to be but a garnet, and so for that he payede nothing, for the emerade but xxli. He solde hym also then plate withoute weyght or ownces : howe muche thabbot therfor therin was decevide he cannot tell, for the trewith ys he ys a vara fole, and a miserable ideote. We pronounced hym perjurede, and willede hym to shew us a cause why he owght not of ryght and justes to be deprived, and reheresyde and rede unto hym hys owne rule, wiche deprivede hym for the premisses, with other many hys transgressions mo, wiche were to long to write. He cowlde not denye but that by those his owne rulles he owght to be deprivede, if ther had bene no nother lawe made or written for deprivation ; and for a conclusion he hath resignede privilie in to our handes, noman therof yet knowyng. We have acceptede and admittede his resignation, *et declaravimus monasterium jam esse vacans*, and sufferith hym to ministre in all thynges (for the avoidance off suspicion) evyn as he dyde before, tyll we knowe your further pleasure. Ther is never a monke in thet howse mete for thet rowme. Yf the erle of Comerlande knewe that hit were voide, he wolde make al labor he cowlde possible for the scelerer ther, wiche I inseure yowe is not mete therfore, for suche causes as ar I knowe ye will alowe, whan I shall declare them unto yow. There is a monke of the howse called Marmaduke to whom Mr. Timmes lefft a prebende in Repon church, nowe abydyng upon the same prebende, the wysyste monke within Inglonde of that cote and well lernede, xx^{ti} yerres officer and rewler of all that howse, a welthie felowe, wiche will gyve yowe syx hundreth markes to make hym abbot ther, and paye yowe immediatly

after the election, without delay or respite, at one payment, and as I suppos withoute much borowyng Ye shall do well to sende for Warren the goldsmith and lay unto hym thefft and sacrilege, and the recept therof, and to know what other thynges he hath hade of thabbot this viij, or ix yerres paste."

Marmaduke Bradley, for that was the name of this "wysyste monke in Inglonde," duly was made Abbot; but whether he was worldly-wise in making this simoniacal purchase we do not know. Three years later he, the thirty-eighth and last Abbot of Fountains, surrendered the Abbey to the King, and the monastery was dissolved. Its income then was stated to be £1173 0 7. The dealings of the King and the Commissioners with this last of the Abbots are obscure; and we do not know whether Marmaduke actually paid over those six hundred marks; or if he did, how much, if anything, was refunded to him, on his office and revenues being abolished. All we know is that he was granted a pension of £100 a year.

Meanwhile, William Thirsk, who had resigned, was afterwards one of those concerned in that rebellion against the authority of Henry VIII. known as the "Pilgrimage of Grace," in 1537. He and those with him thought to undo what had been done in the matter of suppressing the monasteries, but their march failed, although 40,000 men, sworn to restore the old order of things and headed by priests, had for a time made a formidable show. It was a North of England insurrection, not supported in the South; and although the insurgents for a time held York and Hull, they thought it better on the whole, as winter was coming on, to accept the terms of pardon offered them, conditionally upon their laying down their arms. Unhappily, however, with the following spring confidence

again to some extent sprang up, and the Pilgrimage was resumed, half-heartedly. It was easily suppressed, and the leaders of it were taken and executed. William Thirsk, with the Abbot of Jervaulx and others, suffered in London, at Tyburn.

The buildings, together with all the landed property of the Abbey, were in 1540 sold to Sir Richard Gresham; and in 1597 were sold by the family to Sir Stephen Proctor, who demolished the princely Abbot's Lodging,



FOUNTAINS HALL

to provide materials for the building of Fountains Hall, that stately mansion which faces the river Skell, and still displays his shield of arms, with the curious motto in misspelled French, *Rien Trovant, Gaineray Tout* "; which suggests, very cryptically that the family had sought nothing and gained everything, perhaps rather in peace of mind than actually in excess of honours and of riches.

The ruins of Fountains Abbey, very stately and

impressive, occupy a great area. Church and domestic buildings alike, although roofless, are in a markedly perfect condition. They are in the Transitional Norman and Early English periods, except for the great tower. The Abbot's Lodging, so wantonly destroyed by Sir Stephen Proctor, was strangely built on a foundation of four parallel tunnels, across the river.

In 1718 Mr. Aislabie, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, created at Studley Royal a park in the formal taste of that time, and subsequently purchased the ruins of Fountains. The combined properties came eventually by bequest into the Robinson family, in 1845, in the person of the then Earl de Grey, who was succeeded by his nephew, G. F. S. Robinson, created in 1871 Marquis of Ripon, whose son, the second Marquis, died in 1923, without issue ; when the title became extinct.

RIEVAULX ABBEY

THE Abbey of Rievaulx, the first of the Cistercian monasteries in Yorkshire, is romantically situated in a deep and secluded vale, some ten miles from Thirsk and thirty-five miles from Scarborough. It is adjacent to the little town of Helmsley, three miles or so distant, and, like that town and the surrounding land, it is the property of Lord Feversham, of the neighbouring Duncombe Park.

Rievaulx was named by the Norman-French monks who first peopled the monastery, from its situation in the profound valley of the little river Rye. The name means " Rye Vale." That valley runs north and south, and therefore the site of the Abbey offered no choice to the monks than to plan their Abbey church running in those directions, instead of east and west, as customary in Christian churches. This was one of the larger abbeys, the abbey church itself measuring 343 feet in length.

Of the nave nothing much remains ; but the surviving choir and transepts, although roofless, are in good preservation ; and of late His Majesty's Office of Works has been busy in excavating the site, recovering some of the old stones, and strengthening the walls. The work has been done with every care, and has been directed to preservation, rather than to restoration.

Rievaulx was founded in sorrow, by one who had suffered a grievous loss. Walter l'Espec, a noble Norman and a great soldier who had fought at the Battle of the Standard, near Northallerton, a man of

large possessions, had lost his only son, who had broken his neck in falling from his horse. He therefore, as the old monkish chronicles, telling the story of the abbey, put it, "resolved to make Christ his heir of part of his lands." Accordingly he founded three monasteries, Rievaulx, Kirkham, and Warden, in Bedfordshire.

It was in 1131 that he made this resolution ; and in later years he renounced the world, and becoming a monk in this one of his three monasteries, died in the habit of a Cistercian, in 1153.

L'Espece admired the Cistercians, alike for their simple, unaffected piety, and for their practical works. The abbey he founded had not, of course, the majesty the existing ruins disclose, for it was largely rebuilt after his time, and displays not so much Transitional Norman as Early English features.

Rievaulx was well endowed with lands, and had flocks of sheep numbering four thousand, with cattle, and rights of free-warren. The pasturage was won by hard toil out of the wilderness.

Beautiful though the scene be now, in this romantic vale, with the high moors and the Hambleton Hills distantly seen, and little valleys and glens descending on either side to it, the scene when the Cistercian monks first came here, and for long after, was gloomy in the extreme. The primeval forests descended to the narrow vale and obscured the sunlight from the monastery itself.

Yet, with courage and patience, the brethren wrought upon their Abbey church and their domestic buildings, quarrying stone from the hillsides and conveying it ingeniously to the site, down inclines and along canals and through the locks they had already made in the course of the Rye. That is the explanation of the



RIEVAULX ABBEY

problem some observers have considered, of how the great masses of building stone were conveyed hither.

Nor were these the only troubles of the monks of Rievaulx. Yorkshire seems remote from the Scottish border, but it was not sufficiently remote but that it often was in peril from the inroads of the Scots at such times when English governance grew feeble. The great doings of Edward the First, who marched into Scotland and humbled Baliol and brought away the Stone of Destiny from Scone to Westminster, were followed by the nerveless rule of Edward the Second, when the Scots, under Bruce, took their revenge at Bannockburn in 1314. The victorious Scots came down even to Rievaulx and plundered it.

There is a tale of those remote times of one of the brethren of Rievaulx who felt he could no longer endure the gloom and deathly stillness of this then dark and remote vale. He determined to escape it and the strictness of the discipline within these walls. So, taking an opportunity, he plunged into the woods and hastened desperately away, wading streams, thrusting through thickets skirting morasses, descending rugged steepes, climbing arduous heights, hoping at last to reach some habitation.

The day drew on to evening ; he was exhausted. At length, as the sun was sinking, he heard the sound of a bell, and through the trees he saw a building. He drew nearer. It was the abbey from which he had escaped in the morning. He had wandered in a circle. " It is the hand of God ! " he exclaimed, and penitently he came to the abbey gate and rang the bell, and begged again to enter.

In the course of time Rievaulx became the chief monastery of the Cistercian order in England. At the feast given by Nevill, Archbishop of York, in 1464,

at his installation, the Abbot of Rievaulx ranked fourth in precedence at table of all the great ecclesiastics assembled there.

Its history comprises thirty-three abbots. The last was Richard de Blyton, who surrendered it to the Commissioners of Henry VIII. Its lands were granted to Thomas, Lord Ross, Earl of Rutland, a descendant of the l'Espece family, in exchange for others. The property descended by marriage to the Duke of Buckingham, and in 1695 it was sold by the second duke, the dissolute George Villiers, to Sir Charles Duncombe.

Mr. Duncombe, the ancestor of Lord Feversham, who in the eighteenth century, owned Rievaulx and resided at Duncombe Park, was one of those squires who loved what our forefathers were accustomed to style "vistas." And, in common with such other squires who were fortunate enough to have a ruined abbey in their demesne, he thought of the ruins merely as a picturesque Gothic feature.

For the purpose of seeing the ruins to the best advantage, he did what the monks themselves never had thought of ; he constructed, about 1758, a terrace on the hillside, along which one may walk and contemplate. From this lengthy grassy walk, high up above the Rye valley, you look down upon the abbey ruins, and see them to the best advantage, in all the beauty of their exquisite setting.

KIRKSTALL ABBEY

SINCE 1882, the ruins of Kirkstall Abbey, on the outskirts of the busy and congested town of Leeds, have been the property of the Corporation, having been purchased and presented to the town by Colonel North, the "Nitrate King," who was presented with the freedom of Leeds, elaborately inscribed and engrossed at a banquet held on the occasion. He lost his parchment roll afterwards, in undesirable company, and it never again was seen.

The Abbey ruins stand in a fine park through which flows the river Aire. The most has here been made of that not very considerable stream, by the aid of well-arranged cascades and clever landscape-gardening, so that the surroundings have a certain nobility, conforming admirably with the romantic ruins of the Abbey church.

Kirkstall Abbey was founded for a colony of Cistercian monks from Fountains by Henry de Lacy, Lord of Pontefract. But the original foundation by this pious nobleman, in pursuance of a vow to establish an Abbey, if he might recover from a long and serious illness, was situated in a less pleasant place than this vale then was. De Lacy established the original Abbey at Barnoldswick, in the inhospitable region of Craven; where the monks not merely found the situation unpleasing, but succeeded in making themselves greatly disliked. Coming to Barnoldswick, they found already there a parish church which they proceeded to pull down, in order to secure themselves

a greater privacy. This raised such a storm of protest that the affair was remitted to the Pope, for settlement. Unhappily for the people of Barnoldswick, that Pope happened to be Eugenius the Third, a supporter of the Cistercians in any and every dispute : and he gave a judgment that the destruction of the parish church was a lesser evil than the possibility of not having a monastery there.

But it needed only five years of Barnoldswick for the first Abbot, Alexander, and his monks to be convinced the place was unsuitable for them. The Abbot, thinking deeply on those matters, in the course of a journey came by chance in a solitary vale upon a hermitage in which several hermits were living a very simple life. He asked them what the place was named, and they said it was Kirkstall. Seleth, the eldest of the hermits, explained how it was they had been led to the spot. He had heard a voice saying " Go to Yorkshire and seek diligently in Airedale for a place named Kirkstall. There thou shalt provide a house for those who shall be servants of my Son."

" Tell me," Seleth had answered, " who is this Son of thine, whom we are to serve."

" I am Mary," answered the voice, " and my Son is called Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour of the World."

Abbot Alexander, pondering all this, and shrewdly observing that the place was eminently desirable, resolved that it must become the site of his new Abbey. The land belonged to one William Peytvin, but the good offices of de Lacy, as intermediary, were secured, and the site was acquired for the new monastery. Some of the hermits who did not wish to join were compensated, and others were received into the community. The transfer was made from Barnoldswick in 1153.

Kirkstall Abbey, was surrendered at a later date than were most of the religious houses, November 22nd, 1540. The annual value is stated by Speed to have been £512 13 4.

The ruins figure in Southey's poem, *Mary, the Maid of the Inn*. The inn itself at which the unfortunate Mary is supposed to have lived is the "Star and Garter," at Kirkstall. But why Southey should have fastened this gruesome story upon Kirkstall is unknown. He found a story distantly resembling it in Dr. Plat's



KIRKSTALL ABBEY

history of Staffordshire, in which it is told of Leek; and there is no Mary in it at all. Southey's poem begins :—

Who is yonder poor maniac, whose wildly fix'd eyes
Seem a heart overcharg'd to express ?
She weeps not, yet often, and deeply, she sighs ;
She never complains, yet her silence implies
The composure of settled distress.

Yet cheerful and happy, nor distant the day
Poor Mary, the maniac, had been.
The trav'ler remembers, who journeyed this way,
No damsel so lovely, so gay,
As Mary, the Maid of the Inn."

What was it, then, that had wrought this distressing change? Well, it was like this. On a dark and stormy night the guests of the inn were congratulating themselves at being in so cosy a shelter, when one said he would not care to walk through the Abbey ruins at that hour. Another, laughing at such fears, said that even Mary would not mind doing so, Mary, accordingly was called, and was offered the present of a new bonnet if she would go; and it was agreed that she should make the expedition and bring back a branch of an elder-tree growing there, as a voucher and guarantee of good faith.

She went and had traversed almost the length of the nave, when she heard voices and saw two men carrying a body they were proposing secretly to bury. As they went, the wind blew off the hat of one. It rolled to where Mary stood, and she snatched it up, and fled. The hat proved to belong to a young man, a worthless fellow, who was Mary's sweetheart; and the discovery unbalanced her mind.

The poet concludes :—

"Where the old Abbey stands, on the common hard by
His gibbet is now to be seen.
His irons from the road you still may espy,
The trav'ler beholds them, and thinks with a sigh,
Of poor Mary, the Maid of the Inn."

JERVAULX ABBEY

JERVAULX (called locally "Jarvis") Abbey, one of the great Cistercian monasteries of Yorkshire, is situated in the North Riding, in the valley of the Ure, whence its name "Ure-vale," is derived. Jervaulx originally was an offshoot from Byland Abbey, but in the course of time grew far more wealthy, and was more magnificent as an Abbey, than its parent. Not at Jervaulx did these colonising monks from Byland first settle, but near Bainbridge, in Wensleydale, and their Abbey was then that of Fors, which was situated on the road between Askrigg and Bainbridge. Fors was founded in 1145, and the monks left it for Jervaulx in 1156. They left the original site because of its bleak and inhospitable nature.

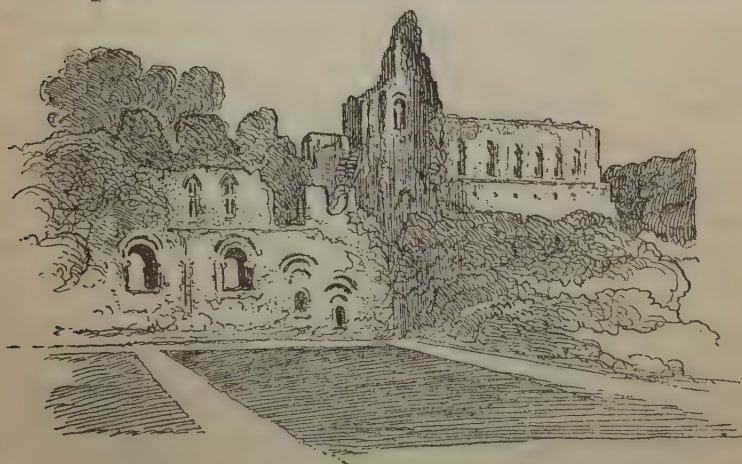
The land was barren and the corn generally would not grow, and when it did the exposed and bleak situation would not permit it to ripen. Such was the character of the land which had been given to the monks by the founder, Askarius Fitzbardolph, not so pious as he should have been, in thus granting away land that was worthless.

The monks of Fors were at first so completely discouraged that they contemplated returning to Byland, and desisted only because they dreaded to be the butt of the brethren there, and having to endure their ridicule and contempt. In this quandary, Conan, Earl of Richmond, granted them the site on which Jervaulx was soon built.

After centuries of quiet prosperity, Jervaulx Abbey

was in 1538 surrendered to the Commissioners of Henry the Eighth, and the site of it was granted to Matthew, Earl of Lennox. The Earls of Ailesbury afterwards came into possession. Nothing, save the foundations, now remains of the Abbey church, but considerable portions of the domestic buildings survive, and form a strikingly picturesque group. The work of demolition was very speedily done : one Richard Bellyseys apparently being employed to perform it.

The peacefulness and graceful seclusion of the ruins to-day are in marked contrast with the last scenes in



JERVAULX ABBEY

the history of Jervaulx. In its final years Adam Sedbergh was Abbot of Jervaulx. So early as 1530 and thereabouts, it became evident that the monasteries were wholly in peril of being suppressed. The last years of the monastic life were at hand. Some of the Abbots bitterly opposed the march of events ; others more or less philosophically resigned themselves to what seemed inevitable.

Adam Sedbergh seems to have been a man of peace, prepared to surrender his Abbey, but, unhappily for

him, he was not suffered to do so. In 1536, when the King's Commissioners might at any time be expected to summon him to yield his Abbey, it seems to have been pretty generally known that he would do their bidding.

The monks of Jervaulx were popular in those parts ; and Yorkshire in general was infuriated by the proposed despoiling of the religious house. The country folk of Wensleydale and round about came in great force to the Abbey of Jervaulx, and " two or three hundred, on a Wednesday, about Michaelmas Day " came to the cloister-garth and sought the Abbot, who prudently made off by a back door and secreted himself on Witton Fell, where he hid by day for some four days, returning nightly to the shelter of his Abbey.

Meanwhile, the angry mob roamed about, visiting other monasteries, such as that of Coverham. Someone having informed them that Abbot Sedbergh had forbidden any servant or tenant of his to associate in any way with them, they returned to Jervaulx and angrily asked for him. They were told he was absent. " Then," said they, " we charge you, the brethren, to choose a new Abbot ! " Obediently the brethren then rang the chapter-bell and some of them proceeded to an election, but others would in no wise do so. In this dilemma, the terrified monks hastily sent a messenger to their Abbot to bring him from his hiding-place.

The messenger found him on the topmost crag of Witton Fell, and told him how the mob was threatening (in the peculiarly illogical way of mobs) to burn the Abbey, if the Abbot would not present himself before them, and promise his best efforts to save the Abbey from dissolution and destruction. The messenger told how very violent was that mob, bursting into the Abbey church and the monastery ; and Abbot Sed-

bergh hesitated to appear before them. Yet, even as he stood, irresolute, a pillar of smoke rising below showed the mob actually were firing the buildings. Down he hastened, only at the Abbey gate to be seized to cries of "Down with the traitor!"

Rescued by the more temperate, he was hurried into the great guesten-hall, the mob following. Here one Leonard Burgh, drawing a dagger, made a stab at him, which fortunately was frustrated by another seizing his arm. Then one William Asleby shouted: "Traitor, where hast thou been?" while another cried: "Get a block, and strike off his head!"

Thus, by sheer force of threats to murder him, was the unhappy last Abbot of Jervaulx impelled to stand out against the King's demand for the surrender of his Abbey, and hustled, against his judgment, into that great but fruitless rebellion in the North, known to history as the "Pilgrimage of Grace," which at Louth, in Lincolnshire, and at Doncaster was already afoot. A mighty force of nobles, gentry, clergy and peasantry, assembled together under a banner bearing the emblem of the Five Wounds of Christ; and prepared to do battle for the old faith and for the religious houses.

Thirty thousand well-armed men, a formidable array, lay encamped on one side of the river Don at Doncaster, facing a smaller Royal force; and who is there shall say what turn might have been given to events had it not been that Robert Aske, the lawyer leader of the Pilgrimage, had scruples about a conflict, and preferred to treat for terms? The likelihood of it is that in a battle the King's army would have been worsted. But, weakly, the lawyer negotiated. The King promised redress and to hold his hand in the matter of the religious houses.

When the dangers of an insurrection were passed, the King's furious anger broke forth upon those who had taken part in the Pilgrimage. Scores were beheaded or hanged : many of the priests among them, and the Abbots of Whalley, Fountains, and Jervaulx were seized and hanged.

Alas ! for that unfortunate Abbot of Jervaulx, whose dismal fate was certain, whatever course he took. He joined the Pilgrimage of Grace against his will, and was captured and conveyed to the Tower of London, whence he was taken and hanged at Tyburn.

You may yet, among the inscriptions on the walls of the Beauchamp Tower, in the Tower of London, see, amid the records of the other unhappy prisoners, the inscription cut by the Abbot himself : " Adam Sedbar, Abbat Jorevall, 1537."

BYLAND ABBEY

NEAR Coxwold, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, in a pleasant vale beneath the Hambleton Hills, stand the ruins of the Cistercian Abbey of Byland. The history of Byland Abbey is a singular one, of changes of site repeatedly made until the brethren had found a locality exactly to their minds and needs. For a monastery to change from the place where it was originally established was not unusual; the pious founders and benefactors who gave the land being not so pious but that they often had a reservation in favour of giving away land that was next to worthless. This is what seems to have happened time and again, to the monks of Byland.

Philip, the third Abbot, tells us, in his story of the foundation, very fully about it. It seems then that Byland was a colony from the great Abbey of Furness, established in 1134, when twelve monks and Gerald, an abbot, set up a religious house at Calder, in Cumberland. They were more enthusiastic than discreet, for these were the dangerous borderlands, and three years later they found it wiser to leave while they had their lives. The Scottish freebooters were ill neighbours and had but little respect even for the religious.

They hastened back to Furness, which, although it was not far removed from these disturbed areas, had some sort of defence against these inroads. But, wholly to their surprise, the mother Abbey refused to take them again to her heart; and so they wandered south, homeless and with few possessions. How few these

were Philip tells us. They were their vestments, some manuscripts, and a wagon drawn by eight oxen. They made their way to York, to seek the advice of Archbishop Thurstan, as the seceding monks from St. Mary's Abbey at York, who founded Fountains Abbey, had done five years earlier.

The Archbishop gave them a letter of recommendation to a considerable personage of Thirsk, Roger de Mowbray, who in his turn directed these wanderers to go to a hermit, one "Dompnus Robertus de Alneto" at Hode. The hermit had been once a monk of Whitby. It is not quite clear what (if anything) de Mowbray expected the hermit to do for these strangers; but the hermit was kind; and it seems ever that he was so taken with their demeanour and holy conversation that he felt impelled to throw in his lot with them. He persuaded de Mowbray to grant them land at Hode, in addition to the site of his own hermitage.

Another account, also narrated by Philip, tells us that Mowbray himself was at that time merely an infant, and that it was while these wanderers were sadly making their way towards York that they were met by the steward of Gundreda, Mowbray's mother. She it was who sent the monks to the hermit, who was her uncle.

This places a different complexion upon matters. The hermit evidently, unlike the general run of such, was an old gentleman of means and landed property, who might be expected to do something for them, if they seemed likeable persons.

At Hode, therefore, they settled for a time. Hode is a place now called "Hoad," two miles to the North of Byland. Angered at the conduct of Furness Abbey at not receiving him and his monks back, when they fled from Calder, Abbot Gerald travelled to France,

and at Savigny in 1142 interviewed the Abbot, who was then overlord of Furness Abbey. He succeeded in obtaining a grant of complete independence for his monastery. That was his last act, for he died at York, on his way home ; and one Roger was elected Abbot in his stead.

The new Abbey prospered so well that the site was found to be too small, and the Lady Gundreda was therefore appealed to, with her son, to grant them land elsewhere.



BYLAND ABBEY

They were accordingly, in 1143, given Byland-on-the-Moor, a small village now known as " Old Byland," where they built a small monastery. But they stayed in it only five years ; the proximity of Rievaulx Abbey did not content them. It was on the other side of the river Rye, and the bells of it could distinctly be heard. Philip says in his story that they " couldn't stand it." His story is couched in Latin, but that is the literal translation.

Accordingly before another five years had passed they moved on again : this time to a place called " Staling," in Cuckwold, under Blackhow Hill : waste

land in the gift of the Mowbrays again. There they built another small monastery and church. For thirty years they remained here and migrated in 1177 to Byland, proposing as the history of these things says, to remain for all time.

In the later chronicles of Byland Abbey, written by William de Newburgh, there is an account of a certain Bishop Wimund, one of the Bishops of Sodor and Man, who was a very fierce and warlike person indeed, and with force of arms had descended upon those Scottish islands of the south, the Hebrides as distinguished from the Orkneys and Shetlands the islands of the north. He had, it would seem, some claims, as alleged son of the Earl of Moray, and when these, rightly or wrongly, were resisted, he wrought havoc in all those parts. At last he fell into the hands of his enemies, who shackled him and, as the records of these doings tell us, "as both his eyes were wicked, deprived him of both. Afterwards he came to us at Byland," continues William de Newburgh, "and quietly continued there many years till his death."

Byland Abbey at the dissolution contained an Abbot and twenty-two monks. Its annual income was £238 9s. 4½d. Part of the transepts and choir of the Abbey church, chiefly in the Early English style, remain. The building was 328 feet in length, the transepts gave a width of 135 feet. It therefore, was a very considerable building. But destruction has made away with much. The west front is the chief beauty of these ruins, and it is very beautiful, with its Early English lancet windows and elaborate central doorway, the whole crowned with the remains of what once was a large circular window.

Such are the results of the wanton destruction wreaked upon these lovely works in the time of Henry

the Eighth. There were Scottish inroads in the Middle Ages, notably in the invasion of the Scots in the time of Edward the Second, when the Battle of Byland was fought almost up to the Abbey walls, in 1322 ; but although the invaders plundered alike Byland and Rievaulx Abbeys, they stayed their hands at destruction. In the reign of Henry the Eighth the Abbeys were destroyed as well as plundered.

MOUNT GRACE PRIORY

THERE were in England only nine houses of that most austere of monastic orders, the Carthusians, which originated at La Grande Chartreuse.

These nine English Carthusian houses were the Charterhouse, London (the best-known of them all), founded in 1232 ; Witham, in Somerset, the earliest, dating from 1181 ; Hinton Charterhouse, 1232 ; Beauvale, 1343 ; Hull, 1369 ; Coventry, 1381 ; Epworth, 1396 ; Mount Grace, 1396 ; and finally Shene, 1414.

The last Prior but one of Beauvale, Prior Lawrence, came, in 1535, to a bad end. Together with Prior Houghton, of the London Charterhouse, and Prior Webster, of Epworth, he opposed the marriage of Henry the Eighth to Anne Boleyn and they were executed.

The Priory of Mount Grace lies in a pleasant and secluded vale east of Thirsk, in Yorkshire, beneath the high moors and the Hambledon Hills, with the rich woods of Ingleby Arncliffe looking down upon the peaceful scene.

This house was founded by Thomas, Duke of Surrey, nephew of Richard the Second, in whose cause he was slain, after that King's deposition by Henry the Fourth. The Duke fell at Cirencester, where he at first was buried, but afterwards his body was laid here, in the church of the monastery he so recently had founded.

The tragic fate of the founder very nearly sealed

that of the Priory, and the building operations were for a time interrupted. They still were incomplete in 1439, but other pious men came forward, and finally the house attained to considerable prosperity ; although, in the very nature of things, its existence was short. It was surrendered in 1535, when its annual value was put at £323 2s. 10½d.

The rule of the Carthusian order, as already noted, was of an extreme austerity. While other orders of



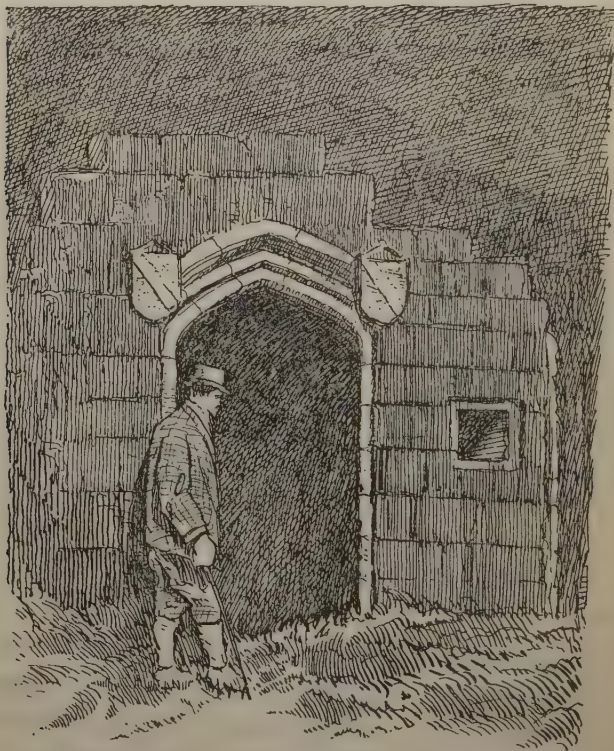
MOUNT GRACE PRIORY

monks met, not only in the church and in the refectory, at meals, or might pace the cloisters in company one with another, the Carthusians led a solitary life, meeting only at the church services. They lived and ate separately, each one in his own solitary cell.

Hence the plan of a Carthusian monastery was widely different from that of other orders. At Mount Grace, which is the only one in England whose unaltered ruins are sufficiently extensive to disclose these arrangements, we yet may see the individual stone cells of the monks, disposed around the north, one of the two

courts. Here are, in all, fifteen cells, each, in effect, a little house, with a living-room and cupboard for books on the ground floor and a bedroom above, with oratory. At the back of each was a small garden.

Here the Carthusian monks passed their lives. Their food was brought to them by servitors whom



A MONK'S CELL, MOUNT GRACE PRIORY

they never saw. It was placed in a hatch in the wall to the side of the door : the hatch of each cell being constructed with an elbow, so that no glimpse from without or within could be obtained. The south-eastern cell is slightly different from the others only in that on either side of the door is a stone shield

sculptured with the arms of Archbishop Scrope of York, who was executed for rebellion against Henry the Fourth, in 1405. These shields bear that famous heraldic device, the 'bend or' which was claimed alike by the Grosvenor and the Scrope families, and was the subject of litigation before a Court of Chivalry for fifteen years from 1385. The Scropes were adjudged the rightful bearers of the charge.

This unfortunate Archbishop, Richard Scrope, a member of the great and powerful family of that name, long seated in Yorkshire, rose in arms with the Earl of Northumberland and Lord Mowbray, as a protest against some high-handed doings of the new-made king, whom he had helped to secure his crown, having assisted in the deposition of Richard the Second. The Archbishop, attired as a man of war, in full armour, urged the people of Yorkshire to resist, and promised them full absolution if they fell in the good cause.

The revolt ended in the cunning artifice of the Earl of Westmorland, who, meeting the army headed by the Archbishop near Topcliffe, and fearing a clash in which the King's force would probably be worsted, pretended to consider the demands of the Archbishop and his supporters reasonable, and promised, if the rebels would disperse, to see these grievances adjusted. But no sooner had Scrope agreed and his men were making for their homes, than Westmorland, laying hands upon the Archbishop, arrested him.

The King, hurrying from Wales, was determined Scrope should die. The Archbishop of Canterbury, for his part, hastened towards York, hoping to save this great dignitary of the Church, and the King, dissembling, reassured him, but at the same time hurried matters forward. He selected Chief Justice

Gascoigne to try Scrope, but that eminent judge, knowing that in law he was not competent to try an Archbishop, refused. The King, however, found one more subservient, and Scrope accordingly was arraigned and swiftly, with Mowbray and one other, sentenced to death and promptly executed outside the walls of York.

The priory church was of a quite moderate size and of no great architectural distinction, as the ruins of it sufficiently prove. A portion of the domestic buildings was altered in 1654 by Thomas Lascelles, for use as a residence, and the date and his initials appear over the door.

ROCHE ABBEY

ROCHE ABBEY, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, near Shireoaks, between Retford and Sheffield, is situated in a narrow rocky vale which, until recent times, was extremely secluded : a solitude such as the monastic orders loved. But those conditions are of the past, and colliery developments threaten the very existence of these romantic and beautiful ruins of a Cistercian abbey, designed and built in a peculiarly beautiful form of Early English architecture.

Roche Abbey, or as the monks in their Latin way had it, "*Abbatis de Rupe*," was founded by two contemporary benefactors, Richard de Buisli and Richard Fitz Turgis.

A certain Durandus, with twelve monks, answering to the number of the Apostles, had been wandering amidst the desolate forest that then covered this part of Yorkshire, seeking a place where they might be permitted to settle and build a monastery. At length they came by chance upon this narrow rift in the rocks, and exclaimed with joy that it was the place where they would be. Their wanderings, hungry and thirsty and cold, were ended. But who owned the land, and would he or they grant it them ? The two landowners already mentioned were complaisant, and on July 30th, 1147, the monks received a gift of this vale, as their charter tells us. Actually there are two charter grants, one confirming the other—by the respective landowners. Let one of them be quoted, to show exactly what a foundation charter was like :

“ Be it known to all who see or hear these letters that I, Richard de Buisli, with consent of my wife and heirs, have given to God and St. Mary, and to the Monks of the Rock, for the salvation of my soul, and the souls of my ancestors, the whole wood from the middle of the road to Eilrichethorpe to Lowthwaite, so far as the water which is the boundary between Maltby and Hooton, and the two sokes which belong to Gamul with a great culture, which is there adjacent, and common of pasture for a hundred sheep, in number six score, in the soke of Maltby, by their tenure that they build their abbey on whichever side of the water they please, according to the situation of the place shall be more suitable. Richard de Buisli and Richard Fitz Turgis agreeing between themselves that both should be the founders of the abbey, on whichsoever's property the abbey may be built, or a perpetual charity, free and quiet from all secular service or gift. Before these witnesses: Adam de Newmarch, Hugh de Stainton, Odo Filmo Johannis, Willielmus Filius Raveni, Jordan Painel, Gamel Filius Besingi, Hugh de Langthwaite, Robert de Sealzebi, William le Buteiler, William de Mileri, Robertus Filius junior, Richard Barbat, Gervase de Barneby, Swein, son of Tor, and Jordan, his son.”

A little stream still meanders, as of old, in this narrow vale, through the meadow-lands belonging once to those two founders who thus came to an agreement that they would dedicate the place to religion. As Dugdale, in his great work, the “*Monasticon Anglicanum*,” tells us, neither of these landowners were willing to give up the honour of being accounted founder of the abbey, with all the advantages of being prayed for in life and death by the grateful monks, which was then the reward looked for. So they were

set down in the foundation charters of the abbey as joint founders.

The name of the abbey was derived from the character of its site ; the vale being enclosed by craggy cliffs of limestone. It was, however, perhaps a peculiarity of one rock amongst these that actually determined that choice of a name. This was a prominent rock in the cliff face which roughly bore a likeness to our Saviour on the Cross.

The vale in which the abbey rose was so narrow and so hemmed in by cliffs and forests that little space was left for the abbey church and monastery, and in the winter, gloom descended upon it. Yet here the Cistercians wrought with loving care, year after year, and created not merely fertile pastures, but an abbey whose ruins sufficiently show us lacked nothing of grace and distinction. They are not extensive ruins : the destroyers were too busy to leave very much ; but the gatehouse, the choir, and parts of the transept are yet standing. They date from about 1241, and thus show us that when at last the abbey church was dedicated, close upon a century had passed since the first settlement here.

The records of Roche Abbey largely survive, and we have the names of all the abbots and the dates of their election. The first abbot, Durandus, was followed in 1159 by Dionysius, who ruled until 1171, and he by Roger de Tickhill, who, in 1179 was succeeded by Hugh de Wadsworth, who died in 1184. Osmond the Cellarer, of Fountains Abbey, was elected in his stead, and he reigned until 1223. Here is a list of the other Abbots, until the dissolution :

Reginald, 1223-1238 ; Richard, 1238-1254 ; Walter, 1254-1268 ; Alan, Jordan and Philip, between 1268 and 1286 ; Thomas, 1286-1287 ; Stephen, 1287-1300 ;

John, 1300 ; Robert, 1300-1324 ; William, 1324-1330 ; Adam de Giggleswick, 1320-1349 ; Simon de Barkewell, 1349-1358 ; John de Aston, 1358-1396 ; Robert, 1396-1438 ; John Wakefield, 1438-1465 ; John Tykil, 1465-1479 ; John Gray, 1479-1486 ; Thomas Thurne, 1486-1488 ; William Burton, 1488-1491 ; John Morpeth, 1491-1503 ; John Heslington, William Cundal, 1503-1538.

And thus a long line of abbots held sway over Roche, until that last sad day of 1538, when Henry Cundal bowed to the inevitable, and surrendered his abbey to the king's commissioners. He made no resistance, he or his monks, but signed the long and elaborate deed of surrender, the final document in the story of Roche, still in existence ; and was suffered to depart quietly. He was granted a pension of £33 6s. 8d, with £30 on going, together with one fourth part of the Abbey plate, the household stuff, and the sheep and farming equipment. Little plate was found in the Abbey, and it was therefore thought that, the question of dissolution having long been considered, he had sold much of it. The Superior, Thomas Twell, was accorded a pension of £6 13s. 4d. ; the bursar, John Dodsworth, £6 ; while the eleven monks were given each £5, and four novices £3 6s. 8d.

The work of demolition was begun at once, with the stripping of the lead from the roofs. It was melted down with the fuel provided by the beautiful carved oak stalls from the choir. The materials were sold to the country gentlemen and the farmers, who stole what they safely could, as an eyewitness records.

And so was Roche Abbey brought down. Its ruins remained neglected until 1776, when the famous landscape-gardener, " Capability Brown," acting apparently for the Earl of Scarborough, owner of the

adjacent Sandbeck Hall, made great changes in the scenery, constructing a lake, levelling down uneven places, and filling up depressions. He made a neat, and tidy lawn around the ruins, much to the disgust of Gilpin, the art-critic and amateur of romantic



THE REFECTORY, EASBY ABBEY

scenery, who wrote that it was all very well to beautify a landscape, "but in a ruin the reigning ideas are solitude, neglect and desolation."

Among these interesting relics in Yorkshire of the age of monasticism, the ruins of Easby Abbey, near Richmond, should not be forgotten, although the

Abbey Church itself has wholly disappeared. This Premonstratensian house, founded in 1152 by Roald, Constable of Richmond Castle, was re-founded, or benefited so greatly by Lord Richard Scrope in 1393 that to him was given by the monks the greater honour. The dedication was unusual—to St. Agatha, a Sicilian Saint and martyr. It is thought that this choice was made by Roald on returning in 1146 from the Second Crusade, perhaps with relics of her.

The ruins are beautifully situated amid scenes of woodland and water on the banks of the Swale, and include the roofless refectory, and a fine Transitional Norman and Decorated Gatehouse, adjoining the parish church. The east window of the great refectory is a noble work of about 1300, with its elaborate tracery almost perfect.

CROWLAND ABBEY

AWAY in the wind-swept levels of Lincolnshire, nine miles from Spalding and almost exactly the same from Peterborough, is a small remote town, the town of Crowland, which owes its being entirely to the once great Abbey of Croixland, or Croyland—"The land of the Cross," as some would have it. But this is merely a speculation in the obvious, and although the earliest mention of the place in a charter of A.D. 806 spells it "Croylandie," it is found in other documents between that date and 1120 rendered 'Crulant,' and 'Crulande.' Hence some have thought the derivation to be from the Latin *Crudam terram* : "muddyland." This fits in, as a geographical description, with such suspicious exactitude that we well may consider it to be merely an ingenious speculation. At anyrate, authentic or not, "Crowland," the land of crows, if you like ; or, if you like it better, "Croyland," the land of the cross are the two derivations that always will hold the field.

Crowland is first heard of in the retirement of St. Guthlac into this then solitary region of the fens A.D. 673-713. Here he sought refuge from the world, and those who have visited Crowland will concede that even now it is a place in which such an one as Guthlac might well be content. But in those dim and distant ages, the fens were solitary indeed, and the waters flowed and the morasses oozed where to-day we see dry and cultivated land.

Guthlac was the son of one Penwald, a nobleman

of Mercia, and allied to the Saxon royal house of that State. After nine years as a soldier he entered the monastery of Repton, and finding life there to be not sufficiently reclusive for him, he decided to adopt the vocation of an anchorite. A legend (a legend among legends), tells us that Guthlac was one of a band of robbers, but one of a courteous sort, who always returned one-third of their plunder. This,



CROWLAND

it will be allowed, was a considerate act, but one not met with outside legendary lore. In any case, this aspersion upon the character of Guthlac is deplorable.

Well, then, Guthlac, selecting the most solitary place he could find, came hither, to a spot generally conceded to have been two miles north-east of the site of the present Crowland Abbey. It was then to be approached only by boat. On this isle amid the reeds he landed. The spot is now known as "Anchor Church Hill."

He was not the only one of his family who took to

this strange mode of life. His sister, Pega, set up as an anchoress some distance south, at the place now called Peakirk. We have not only the year, A.D. 699, when Guthlac came to these wilds, but also the very day: the day of St. Bartholomew, August 24th.

Guthlac was then only twenty-six years of age. Struck with the sanctity of this recluse, Bishop Hædda visited him and ordained him. To Guthlac's lonely isle, in A.D. 709, came Ethelbald, outlawed by his cousin, King Cœlred. Guthlac foretold that Ethelbald would peacefully succeed as king; but he himself did not live to see the fulfilment, for he died in A.D. 714, and Ethelbald did not become king until two years later.

The king had, however, vowed to found a monastery here, and he redeemed his promise, endowing a house for Benedictine monks where the Abbey yet stands.

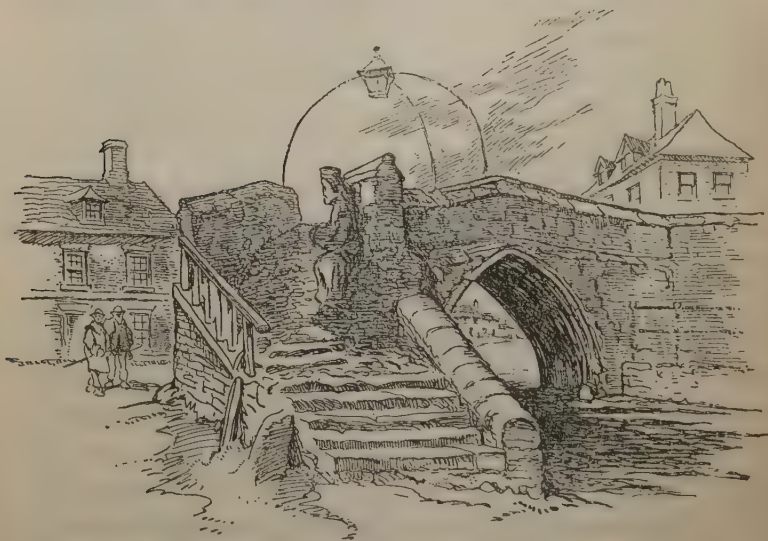
The sole company St. Guthlac had in his cell, except when a very occasional bishop or an even more rare visitant in the form of an exiled prince came this way, were the devils and inimical sprites who, according to Guthlac's own account, infested the place and all these watery reaches. Again, according to himself, these supernatural tormentors pinched and persecuted him unmercifully, until by prayer and penance he at length overcame them.

We must needs take Guthlac in a metaphoric sense; and if he were not consciously metaphorical, we must needs then, suspect either his sanctity, as telling the things that were not, or his sanity, in imagining them. The only devils in those swamps were agues and rheumatisms; and the shrieking things of which he speaks were but the sea-gulls and the curlews of those lonely wastes.

The monastery which was destroyed by the Danes

in A.D. 866, when the Abbot was cruelly slain at the Altar, was rebuilt by Thurkettel, who became Abbot in A.D. 946. New buildings again arose a century later, but these were burnt about 1091. Again rebuilt, the Abbey was partly destroyed by the earthquake of 1118. Once more rebuilt, it was partly destroyed by fire in 1170 ; but was again re-edified, more beautiful than before.

The existing noble ruins, standing out prominently



THE TRIANGULAR BRIDGE, CROWLAND

in these flat lands, are those of the lovely West Front, of Early English date, with upper stages added in the early part of the Perpendicular period, 1380 ; the north-west tower dates from 1427. Of the body of the Abbey church only the north aisle remains, now used as the parish church.

When the first buildings arose, they had to be reared on piles driven nearly six feet deep into the bog. Several of these piles have been drawn out. On top

of them was placed gravel, clay, and stone, brought in boats from great distances. With such almost incredible labour was Crowland Abbey first reared.

Much of the early history of Crowland Abbey survives in the so-called "Chronicle of Ingulphus," who became Abbot in 1076. This was, however, written three centuries after his death; even if it be not actually a much later forgery. Later, Crowland, unlikely place though it were, became a centre from which learning was spread. The Benedictines ever were scholars; and Abbot Joffrid, or Geoffrey, about 1113, was a Frenchman from Normandy, appointed by Henry I. He, with some of his most accomplished monks, lectured on grammar, logic, rhetoric, and philosophy in the original barn at Cambridge whence the University developed.

French and Latin were the languages employed, and we are asked to believe that although their hearers did not comprehend those tongues, yet the eloquence and the comely person of Joffrid so wrought upon the students that they understood the purport of everything. More to the purpose, Joffrid and his monks secured from this course of lectures considerable funds for the rebuilding of the Abbey; and when the foundation stone of it was laid, the ceremony was performed in the presence of five thousand persons.

The small town of Crowland, more resembling a village, was formerly islanded, as the curious triangular bridge in the street would imply, although no water now runs here. At the Dissolution, the Abbey was found to be worth £1,287 15s. 11¼d. annually. It was the richest monastic house in Lincolnshire; a surprising statement until we recall the exceptional sanctity of Guthlac, and the many gifts showered upon his Abbey for his sake.

Crowland, in its prime, owned a magnificent library, and its Abbots exercised a sumptuous hospitality. The old local phrase, "curst Crowland," it has been held by the well-informed in Lincolnshire lore to mean far otherwise than that phrase would suggest. It is a debased form of "courteous Crowland," referring to the graceful hospitality of its Abbots and brethren.

The famous Triangular Bridge, already mentioned, in the street of Crowland is mentioned in a charter of A.D. 943, but it was rebuilt in its present form at some time in the thirteenth century. It originally spanned the confluence of three streams, and was built partly as an exercise of architectural ingenuity, on the pilgrims' path to the Abbey. The three streams which united here were the Welland, the Catwater Drain, and the Nene. This remarkable stone bridge was never intended for other than foot-passengers as the exceedingly steep and narrow roadways, in cobbled steps, over it will sufficiently prove to anyone crossing them. The bridge's three pointed arches spring from abutments at the angles of an equilateral triangle. They sufficiently display to us the very high degree of technical knowledge to which the architects of that period had attained ; no mere rule of thumb, empirical attainment, but a real mathematical efficiency, with which we, too often, are not prepared to credit them. The streams flowing beneath these arches were long since dried up, or diverted. Stukeley, the eighteenth century antiquary, says "horses and carriages go under it." He implies, of course, that the place was dry, even then ; but it would seem that the roadway then must have been much lower than now it is, for vehicles to pass beneath. The seated stone figure, over six feet in height, placed at one end of the bridge, and vulgarly said to represent Oliver Cromwell, holding a

penny loaf ; or alternatively Ethelbald, who visited Guthlac here ; or King Alfred, or his brother, Ethelbald the Second, son of Ethelwulf (a sufficiently wide choice), is really a figure of God the Father, which once crowned the rows of saints in the niches of the Abbey's west front. It either fell, or was taken down. The peculiar flat treatment of the statue at once reveals its origin in a niche against a wall-space. The alleged " penny-loaf " is an orb.

VAUDEY ABBEY

LINCOLNSHIRE possessed numerous religious houses, of which not many important remains are left. The ruins of Thornton Abbey are picturesque, but of the Cistercian Abbey of Vaudey, which stood where now is the park of Grimsthorpe Castle, the seat of the Willoughby de Eresbys, only a few fragments of masonry are now to be seen.

This Abbey, whose original picturesque name was Vallis Dei, or "God's Vale," was founded by William, Earl of Albemarle. At the dissolution, its annual value was stated to be £124 5s. 11d. Its lands were granted to the King's brother-in-law, the Duke of Suffolk.

SWINESHEAD ABBEY

CLOSE by Vaudey Abbey was another Cistercian monastery, Swineshead Abbey, founded by Robert Gresley, in 1134. Its chief claim to recollection is that the evil King John came to Swineshead for refuge on that disastrous progress in 1216, in which he lost his baggage-train when overtaken by the rising tide in the Wash. His crown and all the treasures he carried with him, together with his records, still lie somewhere there ; and occasionally we have heard romantic stories of projected searches for the King's lost valuables.

On the very night of his coming to Swineshead Abbey the King was seized with that illness from which he died a few days later, at Newark-on-Trent, October 19th. The cause was stated to be a surfeit of peaches and new cider ; but there were not wanting those who declared he had been poisoned by the monks.

It is true he was an enemy to religion, and that his death was welcome. A legend of that time declared he was poisoned because he had threatened to raise the price of bread all over England.

Shakespeare, whether he really accepted the story, or adopted it for his dramatic purpose, has in his *King John*, Act v. scene 6, a conversation in the neighbourhood of Swineshead Abbey between Hubert de Burgh and Philip Falconbridge :

“ Hubert : ‘ The King, I fear, is poisoned by
a monk : I left him almost
speechless.’ ”

“ Philip : ‘ How did he take it ? Who did take it to him ? ’ ”

“ Hubert : ‘ A monk, I tell you, a resolved villain.’ ”

The value of Swineshead Abbey at the dissolution was £176. Nothing is left of it save a few fragments and one mail-clad effigy.

The site is occupied by a farmhouse, built in 1607. The unpleasing name of Swineshead has nothing to do with swine. It derives from “ swin.” The Swin, then was a creek communicating with the Wash.

SEMPRINGHAM PRIORY

AMONG the several small and somewhat obscure monastic orders which never attained the importance of, for example, the Benedictines or the Cistercians, that of the Gilbertines is among the most remarkable.

This order was founded by Gilbert of Sempringham, a village between Fillingham and Billingborough. Gilbert, the son of a Norman knight, was born about



SEMPRINGHAM CHURCH

1083. Being deformed, and thus unable to serve the usual duties of knighthood, he adopted the clerical profession. It was when chaplain to Bishop Alexander, of Lincoln, that he conceived his plan of founding a religious house alike of monks and nuns. His first idea was that it should be a house within the Cistercian order, but no Cistercian monastery would entertain this novel proposal.

Gilbert thereupon drew up rules for an entirely new order, which found favour with the Pope, Eugenius the Third, who instituted it in 1131. Gilbert's rules were picked and chosen from such of the existing rules of other orders which seemed to him suitable for his purpose.

Although the monks and nuns resided under one roof, they did not actually meet, and even at the services in their churches, a wall separated them. Gilbert was a man of wealth, and founded in his lifetime thirteen Gilbertine establishments, containing some 1,500 nuns and 700 monks. Most of these were in Lincolnshire. He is supposed to have lived to the age of 106, and to have died at Sempringham, in 1189. The Pope, Innocent the Third, canonised him in 1203, and thus he is "Saint Gilbert." The Gilbertine house at Sempringham was a priory. At the dissolution, it was worth £359 12s. 7d. a year. It was granted to Lord Clinton, who built a house (itself long since destroyed) with some of the materials. The Priory Church, near the parish church, stands lonely on a hilltop.

THORNTON ABBEY

BUT the noblest remains of any Abbey in Lincolnshire are those of Thornton Abbey, which stand in the park of Brocklesby, the seat of the Earl of Yarborough. These consist chiefly of the great gatehouse, a magnificent stone structure, built by Abbot Thomas de Greetham, in 1382. In the lower row of niches over



THE GATEHOUSE, THORNTON ABBEY

the archway remains a statue of the Virgin being crowned by the Holy Trinity, with a statue of St. John the Baptist, and St. Augustine. The figures above are not clearly to be distinguished.

The other remains are those of the Abbot's Lodging, now a farmhouse, containing a stone-vaulted lower floor, small portions of the Chapter House. The tran-

septs, and many scattered monuments complete the list of these ruins.

Thornton Abbey was founded in 1139 by William, Earl of Albemarle, as a monastery of Augustine Canons. At its surrender, in 1541, the annual value was £730, a great sum in those times. According to tradition, one of the abbots was walled up alive, either Thomas de Greetham, or Walter Multon, 1443. A manuscript by Bishop Tanner, in the Bodleian Library, says that the fourteenth Abbot, Thomas de Greetham's record has been mutilated "to prevent scandal to the Church." Of Walter Multon, he says "he died, but by what death I know not. He hath no obit as other abbots have, and his place of burial hath not been found."

According to the eighteenth century antiquary, Stukeley, when one of the Abbey walls was in his own time taken down, a skeleton was found in a sitting posture, with a lamp beside it, and this was regarded as confirmation of the old tradition.

LINDISFARNE ABBEY

OFF the wild coast of Northumberland, nine miles short of Berwick-on-Tweed, are the Farne Islands, near them is the solitary Holy Island, or Lindisfarne, four miles and a half from the shore, but reached at low tide by a somewhat difficult way across the sands. The way is so long and the danger of being overtaken by the tide is so great that, in addition to a line of stakes placed in the sands, to guide strangers, there are two or more boxes, fixed upon piles, into which those who are unfortunate enough to be overtaken by the rising tide may take refuge until the ebb.

Holy Island stands boldly up, like another St. Michael's Mount, a pyramid of rock, crested by a picturesque castle built in the reign of Henry VIII. for coast defence.

Away at the other extremity of the island, where the land is flat, stand the red sandstone ruins of a religious house whose story goes back to the early days of Christianity : a story which gives to Holy Island its name.

Here it was, in A.D. 634, that St. Aidan began his Christianising mission in Northumbria. Aidan, a monk of Iona, was sent out from that Scottish isle on a mission to Oswald, King of Northumbria. He founded on this rocky island a monastery in which the rule of St. Columba, the saint of Iona, was observed, and he became Bishop of Lindisfarne, and his church ranked as a cathedral. To Aidan succeeded four others, and then the famous St. Cuthbert as sixth



LINDISFARNE CASTLE AND ABBEY

Bishop of Lindisfarne, in A.D. 687. He, the shepherd lad who became a monk of Melrose, and eventually Bishop of Lindisfarne, died here in A.D. 687, and was buried within his humble and primitive cathedral. There for a time his body rested, but the exposed nature of this coast always had tempted the northern raiders from overseas, and in A.D. 875 came the Danes, who ravaged the place and completely destroyed all vestiges of Christianity there.

And thus desolate, perhaps, for over two hundred years the island remained ; for none dared linger there. The monks had hurriedly fled at the onset of that Danish inroad, taking with them the body of St. Cuthbert. The story of their wanderings in the North of England and in Scotland, for seven years, carrying the body of St. Cuthbert with them, until they could find a site for a permanent home, is itself a romance. They settled at Chester-le-Street, and finally at Durham.

The monks of Whitby Abbey, in 1093, sent out a colony from their own cliff-top house to re-found a monastery on Holy Island ; and they built on the site of St. Aidan's church a Benedictine Priory. It is their church whose ruins we now see.

The monks of Whitby built their Priory church—generally it is styled an “Abbey”—much in the likeness of the architecture of Durham Cathedral, as we may see. Their monastic buildings lasted well over that time, about 1536, when the monastery was surrendered ; but pilfering of the lead from the roofs and later of the stone, has, together with the ravages of the weather, bitten deeply into walls and doors and windows. For the Priory ruins stand open to the seashore. No sheltered vale here, nothing between them and the roar of the winds and waves.

Yet the monks of Lindisfarne were not poor. Their dwelling on Holy Island may have been windswept, but they kept house very comfortably within ; for the monastery had excellent revenues, derived from lands at Buckton Swinhoe, Fenwick, Goswick, and Cheswick ; and the old ecclesiastical parish of Holy Island included them, and was styled " Islandshire," as sometimes it is yet called.

" Who lives a good life is sure to live well," says the old song ; and that the monks of Lindisfarne were not content with the pulse on which Saint Aidan fared



LINDISFARNE ABBEY

meagrely (when he did not give even that frugal diet to the birds) we have ample evidence. Thus ran the ancient rhyme about them :

" From Goswick we've geese ; from Cheswick we've cheese ;

From Buckton we've venison in store
From Swinhoe we've bacon, but the Scots have it taken,
And the Prior is longing for more."

" For the solace of the brethren and strangers " we learn from the Priory accounts, there was kept great

store of geese, ducks, capons, and porkers, with a goodly supply of strong ale and wine ; and inventories of the monastery's furnishing show them to have possessed elaborate and costly vestments, including white and red satin articles ; while the objects used for the services comprised altar-cloths and the like in cloth of gold.

Nor was the monastery lacking in defence, for it was embattled and loop-holed, and possessed some guns,—such as were the guns of that age—and pieces of armour. But we do not learn that the brethren or their household ever were at the necessity of putting the defensible character of their house to the proof.

NEWSTEAD PRIORY

FIRSTLY, let it be said that Newstead is an Abbey only by popular repute. Actually it was a priory, but "abbey" has always seemed, for whatever reason, more romantic a name than "priory," and therefore we find many older religious establishments which were never of the higher rank of "abbey" given by popular assent the greater title than that of "priory," which properly belongs to them.

Newark "Abbey," in Surrey, close to Ripley, is a case in which a priory has thus attained an eminence it never owned in pre-Reformation times.

The Priory of Newstead or, as the monks in their Latin way, had it "de Novo Locus," in Nottinghamshire, was founded in 1170 by Henry the Second for Black Augustine Canons. This was one of the many acts of expiation by the king for the murder of Thomas à Becket.

The annals of Newstead while yet it remained a religious house are not remarkable. The picturesque story of it begins only after the Dissolution. In 1539, when it was surrendered, its income was found to be £219 18s. 8d. per annum. The last prior, John Blake, surrendered the place peaceably, and was granted a pension of £16 13s. 4d. It should be understood, when reading these figures, that money values were then far different from those of modern times, and that to arrive at a just comparison, these figures should be multiplied by some twenty times.

In May, 1540, the property of Newstead Priory,

together with other monastic lands and buildings, was sold to Sir John Byron, of Colwick, who speedily set about building a fine residence adjoining the Priory. He did not build altogether anew, but largely fashioned his stately mansion out of the domestic buildings of the monastery. These he greatly extended with stone taken from the church itself, which he completely unroofed and thoroughly dismantled. The fine cloister-walks and the noble, though sadly mutilated, West Front, with its empty window, are the most important parts remaining.

The history of the Byron family after they had acquired Newstead affords some confirmation in the belief in disasters falling upon the sacrilegious. Sir Richard Byron, who garrisoned the house for King Charles, was reduced to severe straits. His successor, who in 1643 was created a baron, died childless and in poverty. At the restoration of Charles the Second his widow was granted a pension of £500.

The second Lord Byron, who had proposed to raise money by felling a thousand of the ancient oaks of Sherwood Forest, was granted a sum of money in lieu, but still the family were left in very poor circumstances.

The fourth baron thrice entered the "holy state." There were no children of the first marriage, and the three sons and one daughter of the second all died unwed, leaving the family honours to be carried on by the children of his third venture, among whom was the fifth lord, grand-uncle of the poet Byron.

That fifth lord was the once-notorious "Devil Byron," whose sister so incensed him by figuring in a scandal that he refused ever again to speak to her, and was said to be haunted by her wailing spirit, crying, "Speak to me, my lord!"

The father of the poet did not succeed to the title. The poet himself, the sixth lord, was at once a genius and a degenerate, and he was afflicted with a club foot. When, in 1798, he came into his heritage, he found his vindictive great-uncle had done everything possible to ruin it. The trees had been felled, the deer in the park all killed, and the house itself was almost uninhabitable.

Unable to maintain his inheritance, the poet, in 1818, sold Newstead for £95,000 to Colonel Wildman, who had plenty of resources, and expended at least £100,000 on repairs.

Sir Richard Phillips gives us some account, in his *Personal Tour*, of Colonel Wildman, who was, he says "a school-fellow in the same form as Lord Byron at Harrow School. In adolescence they were separated at college, and in manhood by their pursuits; but they lived in friendship. If Lord Byron was constrained by circumstances to allow Newstead to be sold, the fittest person living to become its proprietor was his friend Colonel Wildman. He was not a cold and formal possessor of Newstead, but, animated even with the feelings of Byron, he took possession of it as a place consecrated by many circumstances of times and persons, and above all by the attachment of his friend Byron. The high-spirited poet, however, ill brooked the necessity of selling an estate entailed in his family since the Reformation (but lost to him and the family by the improvidence of a predecessor), and retiring into Tuscany there indulged in those splenetic feelings which mark his later writings."

How Byron loved Newstead we well may judge from his description of it, of which we presently shall quote. The description carries an unmistakable note of sincerity, and it is descriptive poetry of a very high

quality, in which, too, is revealed Byron's competence as a man of taste, and an informed critic of art and architecture, above the generality, of his time.

An old, old monastery once, and now
Still older mansion—of a rich and rare
Mix'd Gothic, such as artists will allow
Few specimens yet left us can compare
Withal, it lies perhaps a little low,
Because the monks preferred a hill behind,
To shelter their devotions from the wind.

It stood embosomed in a happy valley,
Crown'd by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
His host, with broad arms 'gainst the thunder-stroke ;
And from beneath his boughs were seen to rally
The dappled foresters ; as day awoke
The branching stag swept down with all his herd
To quaff a brook which murmur'd like a bird.

Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
Broad and transparent, deep, and freshly fed
By a river, which its soften'd way did take
In currents through the calmer water spread
Around : the wild fowl nestled in the brake
And sedges, brooding in their liquid bed ;
The woods sloped downwards to its brink, and stood
With their green faces fix'd upon the flood.

Its outlet dash'd into a deep cascade
Sparkling with foam, until again subsiding
Its shriller echoes like an infant made
Quiet, sank into softer ripples, gliding
Into a rivulet ; and thus allay'd
Pursued its course, now gleaming and now hiding
Its windings through the woods ; now clear, now blue
According as the skies their shadows threw.

In the next stanza you see how perfectly Byron was in accord with those Gothic remains :—

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile
(While yet the church was Rome's) stood half apart
In a grand arch, which once screen'd many an aisle ;
 These last had disappeared ; a loss to art ;
The first yet frown'd superbly o'er the soil,
 And kindled feelings in the roughest heart,
Which mourn'd the power of time's or tempest's march,
 In gazing on that venerable arch.

Within a niche, nigh to its pinnacle,
 Twelve saints had once stood sanctified in stone ;
But these had fallen, not when the friars fell,
 But in the war which struck Charles from his throne,
When each house was a fortalice—as tell
 The annals of full many a line undone—
The gallant Cavaliers who fought in vain
 For those who knew not to resign or reign.

But in a higher niche, alone, but crown'd,
 The Virgin Mother of the God-born child
With her Son in her blessed arms, look'd round ;
 Spared by some chance when all around was spoil'd ;
She made the earth below seem holy ground,
 This may be superstition, weak or wild,
But even the faintest relics of a shrine
 Of any worship make some thoughts divine.

A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
 Shorn of its glass of thousand colourings
Through which the deepen'd glories once could enter
 Streaming from off the sun like seraph's wings,
Now yawns all desolate ; now loud, now fainter,
 The gale sweeps through its fretwork, and oft sings
The owl his anthem, where the silenced quire
 Lie with their hallelujahs quench'd like fire.

Amidst the court a Gothic fountain play'd
Symmetrical, but decked with carvings quaint—
Strange faces like to men in masquerade,
And here perhaps a monster, there a saint ;
The spring rush'd through grim mouths of granite made,
And sparkled into basins, where it spent
Its little torrent in a thousand bubbles
Like man's vain glory, and his vainer troubles.

The mansion's self was vast and venerable,
With more of the monastic than has been
Elsewhere preserv'd ; the cloisters still were stable,
The cells, too, and refectory, I ween ;
An exquisite small chapel had been able
Still unimpair'd, to decorate the scene ;
The rest had been reform'd, replaced, or sunk,
And spoke more of the baron than the monk.

Huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers join'd
By no quite lawful marriage of the arts,
Might shock a connoisseur ; but when combin'd,
Form'd a whole, which, irregular in parts,
Yet left a grand impression on the mind,
At least of those whose eyes are in their hearts ;
We gaze upon a giant for his stature
Not judge at first if all be true to nature.

Immensely wealthy as he was when he entered upon Newstead, Colonel Wildman became greatly reduced by the Emancipation of Slavery Act, which made away with most of his riches in the West Indies.

After the death of Colonel Wildman, in 1861, the estate was again sold, and the great park, except for the grounds immediately surrounding the house, was cut up into farms. The new owner, Mr. Webb, suffered many domestic afflictions ; and in recent times the untoward happenings to later owners have been too marked to be disregarded.

In the cloister-garden the monks' fishpond yet remains. A variety of hauntings is said to give owners and visitors alike occasional thrills. Chief among them is, or was, the Black Friar. Byron wrote of him, and saw him :

" A monk arrayed
In cowl and beads, and dusky garb appeared,
Now in the moonlight, and now lapsed in shade,
With steps that trod as heavy, yet unheard."

The lovely Early English west front of the Priory, with that empty window of which Byron writes, is all that remains of the Priory church. It forms an odd contrast with the would-be Gothic front of the mansion itself, which, however, is formed from the domestic part of the monastery. The great dining-room was originally the refectory ; the servants' hall was the guest-house, and what is now the drawing-room was the monks' dormitory.

Before Byron, realising he must leave Newstead, had departed his country, and like his own " Childe Harold," bade his " native land, good-night," he had, with all the poet's romantic fervour, embarked upon an expensive refurnishing of the house. He laid down exquisite carpets, papered the walls of the bedrooms, and installed gorgeously-canopied beds, glowing with crimson and gold ; but he forgot the more commonplace essential of weather-proof roofs. The roofs were rotten with age and neglect, and very soon they poured rain in, during storms, more like colanders than roofs. His carpets and hangings were ruined, and none dared sleep in his damp beds.

Colonel Wildman repaired the roofs, and the damage done, and retained Byron's bedroom and dressing-room, exactly as they had been ; and when Mr. W. F.

Webb in 1860 acquired the property, he kept all these associations with the poet exactly as he found them ; so that the visitor to-day may see what a nobleman in those times, even though he were but a Baron in rank, considered was due to himself in the matter of a bedstead. Coronets decorate the angles of his gorgeous four-poster and gorgeous curtains hang from it. On one wall hangs a picture of Harrow School, while on another is a portrait of " Gentleman Jackson," the pugilist who taught him and many another peer the noble art of the bruiser. Portraits of his valet, Joe Murray (both on the same plane, in Byron's estimation), also decorate the room, and in the oriel window are his writing-table and inkstand.

Relics of a very different personage—none other than Livingstone—are kept at Newstead. The circular table on which was written a part of *Childe Harold*, takes us back again to Byron ; with fencing-foils and the collar of the poet's favourite dog, " Boatswain." Here, too, is the rapier with which " Devil Byron," the fifth lord, the poet's grand-uncle, in 1765, killed Mr. Chaworth of Annesley Hall, in a duel. That evil peer, wrecker of the estate and spoiler of the woods was like a wicked lord of romantic novels, but not quite so wicked as this name given him would lead one to suppose. He was merely a man of savage and morose temper, and did not, as the rustics thought he did, worship devils. This idea came from their ignorance, in seeing two figures he had brought home from his travels in Italy and had set up in the woods ; images of the god Pan and of a female satyr. The rustics may be excused for thinking them devilish, and from them arguing the worst of the morose lord who, it was reported, always dined with a couple of pistols on the table in front of him. This figure of

dread died in 1798, after the exceedingly long tenure of the Abbey since 1736. The poet himself, who succeeded, was then only a boy of ten, the son of a gambler and a profligate, who had died in 1791, having wasted all his means and the fortune of his second wife. Such was "Mad Jack Byron."

It was years before the poet took up residence at Newstead, and in the meanwhile it was let to Lord Grey de Ruthin. In 1808, when Byron had come down from Cambridge, he entered upon his heritage ; it and he embarrassed with debts. This is no place in which to tell his story ; of these gloomy halls, haunted as it is thought, or of Byron's retriever, Boatswain, to whom he erected that monument which no visitor to Newstead fails to see ; with its pathetic and yet cynical inscription to "one who possessed beauty without vanity, strength without insolence, courage without ferocity, and all the virtues of man, without his vices."

The original four thousand acres of Newstead Park long ago were cut up into ploughlands and pastures, and the gardens and private grounds of the Priory (or "Abbey," as persistently it is, and ever will be, styled) are of more modest dimensions. Yet it is a stately and a storied place.

At this present time of writing, news comes that Newstead has been presented to the nation.

BATTLE ABBEY

WHERE Harold, the last Saxon king, fell on the battlefield of Senlac, on that fatal day for the Anglo-Saxon nation, October 14th, 1066, and Duke William of Normandy remained the victorious invader, there soon arose an Abbey to celebrate the event and to be a thankoffering for the fortunes of that day. This once-magnificent Abbey of Battle, near Hastings, is not the only Abbey which owes its foundation and its name to a like origin. The Abbey of Batalha, in Portugal, is a parallel.

We have also in Shropshire, certainly not an abbey, but a parish church, built, and the parish itself created, as a thankoffering by Henry the Fourth for victory in the Battle of Shrewsbury, 1403.

The Battle of Senlac—or, as more commonly it is named, of Hastings—was fought for nine hours, between the fresh Norman force and the tired Saxon army, almost worn out with a hurried march from Yorkshire, where, at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, near York, Harold had utterly defeated another invader. But it was rather the impetuous charges of the Saxons here at Senlac than anything else which lost them the day. The Normans stood fast and allowed them to exhaust themselves upon these efforts, and when, in the evening, wearied, the Saxons began to lose heart, they broke on seeing their hero-king, Harold, struck down by an arrow which, descending from a height, pierced his eye, and so killed him.

On that spot where Harold died was placed the

high altar of William of Normandy's great Abbey church.

The King of England—as William now had become—spent money freely from his treasury on the Abbey ; shiploads of the fine building-stone from the quarries of Caen, in Normandy, came across the Channel ; the new buildings were richly endowed with manors far and near ; the monastery was made the centre of a three miles circuit which was exempted from all other jurisdictions, ecclesiastical or civil. Hence it comes that the parish church of Battle is a Deanery and a “ peculiar ” to this day.

The Abbots of Battle, moreover, were mitred, and sat in Parliament ; and besides holding the right of sanctuary, the Abbey had also those of treasure-trove, inquest, and free-warren. The Abbots were given the privilege of pardoning any criminal they might meet on his way to execution. It was a right that meant a good deal, for capital punishment then was awarded for a very long list of what we now would style minor offences.

More interesting than all other gifts to the Abbey by William were his sword and his Coronation robes. But Battle Abbey was long a-building ; twenty-eight years had gone by since the battle, and William had been seven years in his grave before it was completed and finally consecrated.

For well over four hundred and fifty years it stood, growing in architectural splendour and in worldly wealth, but decaying in the spiritual life. Its income was equal to £10,000 per annum of our money ; the Abbot entertained guests of the noblest, and the indiscriminate charity of the monks made Battle a centre for all the “ mighty beggares, sturdye vagrantes, idle mychers, and foule cozeners ” in Sussex. Thus

was Battle Abbey fittingly to be ended in 1538, when thus its dependents could be described.

The monks of Battle could be bribed to perform many illegitimate deeds. There had hung in the Abbey from its beginning a parchment which purported to be the roll of those knights who had fought with William at the battle. This famous "Roll of Battle Abbey" was, on the suppression of this house, removed to Cowdray, where it perished in the fire of 1793. But that relic had lost much of its historical value, for it had been the practice of the monks, "for a consideration," to add the names of noble or wealthy families. Early it had become usual among the landed families to declare that their ancestors had, in the well-worn phrase, "come over with the Conqueror," and Battle Abbey was ever ready to satisfy this foible.

On its surrender to the king, in 1538, the Abbey was granted to Sir Anthony Browne. The neighbourhood did not willingly see the monks go and Sir Anthony Browne enter upon their place; and the folk long dwelt upon the legend of the last monk leaving the Abbey and cursing the race of the Brownes with the fate of the sacrilegious.

"By fire and water," he vowed that the race of the Brownes should end. But for generations that family flourished and the curse slept. Sir Anthony's son became a peer, by the title of Viscount Montague. The estates of Battle Abbey in 1789 passed to Sir Thomas Webster, who bought them of the sixth viscount.

It was four years later, in 1793, that the prophecy came true, when the beautiful mansion of Cowdray, then the property of the Brownes, was destroyed by fire; and in the following month the eighth Lord Montague, while yet ignorant of what had happened at home, met his death by drowning, in the Falls of

Lauffen, near Schaffhausen, on the Rhine, when but twenty-four years of age.

The long line of the Websters, owners of Battle Abbey, ended in 1923, when the eighth and last baronet, Sir Augustus Webster, died, without heirs, after terrible domestic disasters.

Battle Abbey is now a girls' school. It is a great mansion, built by the Brownes, incorporating a parlour for the reception of strangers. The site of the high altar, where Harold fell, is now a garden. The gatehouse, on the village green of Battle, is the chief relic of the Abbey.

NETLEY ABBEY

THREE miles from Southampton, in the county of Hampshire—or, as official documents still have it, the county of Southampton—is Netley Abbey, whose highly picturesque ruins are situated close to the shores of Southampton Water, divided from that beautiful land and seascape only by a narrow fringe of road and the gardens of some shoreward villas. The site, so naturally lovely, has unhappily been spoiled of late years by the growth of a great commercial seaport and by the proximity of the famous Netley Hospital—a military necessity. Shops and small houses now neighbour the exquisite remains of the Abbey church, once so remote from the doings of the world.

How different it all is now from the description given by Horace Walpole, in 1755: “How shall I describe Netley to you? I can only by telling you it is the spot in the world which Mr. Chute and I wish. The ruins are vast, and retain fragments of beautiful fretted roof, pendent in the air, with all variety of Gothic patterns of windows, wrapped round and round with ivy.”

There are various derivations of the name of Netley, but the true one is doubtless that of “Natan-leage,” the Saxon for a wooded district.

The Abbey was a Cistercian house, founded by Henry the Third in 1239, and dissolved in the common ruin under Henry the Eighth. The Cistercian monks who first occupied Netley were a colony from their older house of Bellus Locus, which later became known,

as it is to-day, as "Beaulieu," not many miles distant.

Seventeen years later the king conferred considerable benefactions upon Netley, including a weekly market and its tolls for the parish of Hound, in which the Abbey is situated ; the rights in a two days' fair at Wellow, and a yearly tun of red wine from the prisage in the King's Customs at Southampton—for use in celebration of the Mass. In a later age this was exchanged for a grant of twenty shillings annually.

But Netley Abbey at times found itself in an impoverished condition ; and in 1338 it is found petitioning for a grant, owing to much of its substance having been expended upon giving aid and hospitality to the large numbers of mariners coming and going. The situation of Netley by the seashore rendered it peculiarly open to these demands, which of their charity, as Christian brethren, could not be denied.

In 1536, the King's Commissioners reported favourably on Netley Abbey ; saying the monks were " by Rapporte of good Religious conversation," and that the monastery was " To the Kinges Subjects and Strangers travelinge the same Sees great Reliefe and Comforte."

Upon the dissolution of the Abbey, it and its properties were granted to Sir William Paulet, Comptroller of the Royal Household.

The Abbey remained practically uninjured during a constant change of ownership until the year 1700, and although it had been converted into a private residence, with the nave of the Abbey church put to use as a kitchen, and the other hitherto sacred precincts turned into account for more or less domestic uses, the successive owners had allowed no spoliation of its architectural features.

But when, in 1700, Netley Abbey became the property of Sir Berkeley Lucy, its doom was sealed. He sold the materials of the church to a certain Taylor, a Southampton builder, and Taylor made arrangements to pull down the great building.

But Taylor, like Joseph, had a dream. He dreamt that while taking down the church roof, the keystone of the vaulting near the great east window fell from its place and killed him. The dream had probably its origin in a warning that had been given him by superstitious friends, some days earlier, not to touch the Abbey with the hands of a spoiler. They would not, they said, for riches untold, be concerned in the demolition of holy and consecrated places.

Taylor was impressed, and the warning preyed upon his mind, and the dream was the result. The next day he hurried off to Mr. Watts, schoolmaster in Southampton, and father of that celebrated divine, Dr. Isaac Watts, author of "How doth the little busy bee," and other improving verse, together with numerous well-known hymns.

Mr. Watts, the schoolmaster, seems to have in one respect been an unworthy progenitor of the excellent and moral Doctor. He gave the troubled Taylor the cynical advice to have no personal hand in the pulling down of the Abbey, and to leave the work to others. The unhappy Taylor, however, disregarded this advice, and actively worked with his men. He was struck to the ground by a falling stone, exactly as he had dreamt, and was killed on the instant.

The work then was discontinued, and none other dared begin it again.

But between 1700 and about 1860 much damage was done by Netley Abbey being a place of popular resort, just outside Southampton. It became a kind

of tea-garden ; and you see the innumerable names and initials of the Dicks, Toms, and Harrys of those times hacked on the venerable walls, so high as those joyous vandals conveniently could reach with their despoiling penknives.

The Rev. Richard Harris Barham, calling himself "Tom Ingoldsby," and author of the famous *Ingoldsby Legends*, saw Netley Abbey in those days of its degradation, and wrote of it in scathing verse ; then, tuning his muse to another strain, ending his poem with the touching stanza :

" I saw thee, Netley, as the sun
Across the western wave
Was sinking slow, And a golden glow
To thy roofless tower he gave.
And the ivy sheen, With its mantle of green
That wrapt thy walls around,
Shone lovelily bright, In that glorious light,
And I felt 'twas holy ground."

WAVERLEY ABBEY

LESS than two miles south of Farnham, in Surrey, once stood the Abbey of Waverley, the earliest monastery of the Cistercians, or White Monks, to be established in England. They settled here in 1128. They were French monks, from the Abbey of Eleemosyna, near Citeaux, a mere thirteen in number. William Giffard, then Bishop of Winchester, was instrumental in bringing over this first community, and in founding the abbey.

It was built on one of the loveliest of sites, in the meadows beside the river Wey, to which it owes its name. The spot is sheltered and is overlooked by Crooksbury Hill—in these times densely grown with firs.

Waverley Abbey soon prospered, in the sense that its establishment increased. In the worldly sense it could not become enriched, for the Cistercians, with their vows of perpetual poverty, never amassed gorgeous shrines or jewelled gear. They were eminently practical men, as farmers and wool-growers, and such wealth as ever they acquired came to them from their labour in agriculture and sheep-raising.

But lands were conferred upon them, and by 1187 the establishment was one of seventy monks and one hundred and twenty lay brethren. The lay brethren were not always of the most desirable sort, as we easily may gather from the story of one of these men, a shoemaker, who, in 1240, became a lay brother and shortly afterwards was arrested on a charge of murder.

The officers of the Crown, with the King's warrant

appeared at the Abbey gate, and, in spite of the protests of the Abbot and his monks, they seized him and bore him away to justice.

Waverley Abbey owned the privilege of sanctuary, by which any criminal who succeeded in reaching its precincts was safe "in the peace of God and religion, no matter what his offence."

This outrage, therefore, upon the Abbey's rights had to be withstood and atoned for, and the matter was



WAVERLEY ABBEY

carried to the King and examined, when it was found that the King's officers had exceeded their jurisdiction. The criminal was restored to sanctuary, and the officers of the law were not only reprimanded, but were also sentenced to be publicly whipped by the dean of the Abbey and the vicar of Farnham, after having asked the pardon of God and of the monks at the abbey gate.

This sentence was duly carried out, and the officers of the law were taught thereby that the Church was, in some respects, more powerful than the State. This incident shows us what we well may consider to have been an abuse of the privilege of sanctuary. But it must not be forgotten that the right of sanctuary had

a very proper and merciful origin. It arose in times when justice was by no means easy to secure ; in times when might nearly always was right, and when a fugitive, whether innocent or guilty, might be pursued and taken or struck down in his flight, without any process of law.

Of course, sanctuary lasted for long centuries after the real need for it had lapsed, and it became at last a menace and a scandal ; but that time had not arrived when the affair of the shoemaker lay brother of Waverley Abbey happened.

This record of strange happenings comes from the *Annales Waverlienses*, annals of the abbey compiled in a long series of years by the monks. A portion of them was published in the eighteenth century. It was when reading these chronicles that Sir Walter Scott was so impressed by the musical name of the abbey that he adopted it for the title of the first of his "Waverley" novels.

The King's Commissioners, upon the surrender of the abbey, reported that its total annual income was £174 8s. 3½d. The monastery and abbey church and lands were granted by Henry the Eighth to Sir W. Fitzwilliam, the King's Treasurer. They passed through several hands, and in 1796 became the property of the Thomson family, when the existing Waverley House was built hard by the abbey ruins and partly with its stones.

Thus the remains, although picturesque and picturesquely situated, are not large. Of the abbey church only the bases of some pillars remain. The chief relic is a portion of the monks' refectory ; and the crypt, or undercroft, of the dormitory is still in existence. All these are of the Early English, thirteenth century, period.

The eight hundredth anniversary of the founding of Waverley Abbey was celebrated in 1928.

READING ABBEY

“ How are the mighty fallen ! ” That thought occurs inevitably to him who visits the melancholy, formless ruins of the once proud Benedictine Abbey of Reading. Less melancholy would it be if these featureless walls were wholly cleared away. This Abbey of the Virgin and of St. John the Evangelist was a Royal foundation : it was Henry the First who, in 1125, established here what he decreed should be a Cluniac monastery of the Order of St. Benedict.

Already there had been an Abbey on this site ; one of three (the two others at Leominster and at Chelsea), which had been abolished by reason of their scandalous conduct. The King richly endowed his new foundation at Reading, and gave to it the possessions of those suppressed houses. The monks of Reading duly honoured their kingly founder, and when he died, ten years later, in France, his body was brought here for interment in the Abbey church and placed before the high altar of that magnificent building which was then in progress, and was not finally consecrated until 1164.

This Abbey church was no less than 450 feet in length, and therefore vied in size with Winchester Cathedral and the Abbey of St. Albans. Not only was this one of the very greatest of Abbeys in England ; its Lord Abbot ranked next after those of Westminster and Glastonbury, and most of them held important offices of state. In its old Chapter House, Parliaments (in those times when Parliament was an itinerant

assembly, following the King's journeys) were held ; and Royal marriages were solemnised.

The story of the last Abbot, Hugh Cook, called, as was customary after the place of his birth, Faringdon, has alike its humorous and its exceedingly grim incidents. Fuller, that quaint gossiping historian, tells us of him, and says he was a man fond of what are delicately styled " the pleasures of the table." That is, he was a great glutton. To the Abbey came one day a hungry stranger, sharp-set with the appetising exercise of hunting. He had wandered far in Windsor Forest



THE GATEHOUSE, READING ABBEY

and now craved the hospitality of my Lord Abbot, which was extended to him, promptly enough, and he was seated at the Abbot's own table.

The Abbot looked with surprise and longing at the valiant onslaught this stranger made upon the eatables and drinkables. He took no exercise and too much food, and had, in consequence, no appetite at all. " Well fare thy heart ! " he exclaimed, as he saw the roast beef rapidly disappearing, " I would give a hundred pounds could I feed so lustily on beef as you do. Alas ! my weak stomach will hardly digest a morsel of rabbit, or the wing of a small chicken."

Some weeks later, when the Abbot had forgotten the incident, a summons came for him to go to London where he was clapped into the Tower, and kept there a miserable prisoner, not knowing what charge might be preferred against him. This is what life was like under our autocratic Tudor sovereigns !

Bread and water was his diet for a time ; and then a sirloin of beef was happily and unexpectedly set before him. Of this he made short work, as may be supposed. Then out of a cupboard in which he had secreted himself sprang the King, who (you will already have suspected) was the hungry stranger of months earlier. " My lord," said he, " deposit presently your hundred pounds in gold, or else go not hence in all the days of your life. I have been your physician, to cure you, and here, as I deserve, I demand my fee for the same."

The Abbot was enlightened. He, as Fuller says, " down with the dust, and glad he had escaped so, returned to Reading so much lighter in purse, so much more merry in heart, than when he came thence."

Yet it was the same merry-minded King who, in 1539, hanged this last of the Abbots of Reading. The favours of Henry the Eighth were uncertain as the weather. The King had given the Abbot a silver cup no great while earlier ; but the Abbot was staunch to his beliefs and to his Abbey. He refused, even as Sir Thomas More did, to acknowledge Henry's supremacy as head of the Church, and he died therefore as a " traitor." With him, suffered Rugg and Onyon, two of his monks, and all were hanged and quartered in the ferocious way of those times.

The Abbot was beatified in 1895. The income of Reading Abbey at the time of its suppression was above £2,000. The Abbey buildings for a time became a Royal Palace, but in 1550 they were granted by Edward

the Sixth to the Lord Protector, the Duke of Somerset. Actually, it may be presumed, as the Lord Protector then was powerful in all things, he made himself a present of them.

He allowed the choir to be demolished, to provide materials for the rebuilding of the parish church of St. Mary in Reading. The astonishing irreverence then shown to everything staggers us. The tomb of Henry the First was then broken up, and his bones thrown away, with those of many another. At a later period the stones of the Lady Chapel were used to build the Poor Knights of Windsor's lodgings in Windsor Castle, and in 1643, when the Civil War was raging, and Reading was about to be besieged, the nave was pulled down by the Royalists, for the purpose of constructing fortifications.

Thus it is that so little is left of Reading Abbey, whose grim walls stand by the Forbury Gardens in the midst of the town. The ruins belong to the Corporation. All save one of the four outer gatehouses have disappeared ; the inner one surviving in a very much restored condition.

The so-called " trial " of the unfortunate last Abbot is said to have been held in the room over the archway. Many of the manuscripts once in Reading Abbey are preserved in the British Museum ; among them is that curious and beautiful early piece of music, the canon, " Sumer is icumen in," dating from about 1226. It is in the Harleian Manuscripts.

What is thought to have been once the greatest treasure among the many holy relics preserved in the Abbey is now in the little Roman Catholic church of St. Peter, Marlow. It is the supposed incorrupt hand of St. James the Great ; or, speaking more exactly, the left hand. The story of this hand goes

back to the seventh century, when Paul, Bishop of Altimo, in Italy, between Padua and Concordia, abandoned his See, in A.D. 640, in fear of the oncoming barbarian invasion. He took refuge with as many of his people who could accompany him, in the island of Torcello; and with them were carried a large number of sacred relics, including the bodies of Saints Theomistus, Traba, Rabata, and Liberalis, and the Hand of St. James. The Pope, Severinus, confirmed the transfer of the See of Altimo to Torcello, in the time of Maurice, who succeeded Bishop Paul. Four hundred years later, in 1040, Adalbert, Archbishop of Bremen, and Bishop of Hamburg, following upon the election of Pope Clement the Second, returning from that election in Rome, brought back with him the Hand, which had been presented to him by Vitale Ursido, Bishop of Torcello. On the death of Adalbert, his property and relics were assigned to the Emperor Henry the Fourth of Germany; and the Hand of St. James became one of the items in the Imperial regalia, where it remained until after the death of the Emperor Henry the Fifth. His widow, the Empress Matilda, a daughter of Henry the First, King of England, came home, bringing with her the Imperial crown of her late husband and this exceptionally sacred relic, which was in 1133 presented to Reading Abbey, accompanied by a letter from Henry the First: "Henry, King of England and Duke of Normandy, to the Abbot and Convent of Reading, greeting: Know ye that the glorious hand of the blessed James the Apostle which the Empress Matilda, my daughter gave me on her return from Germany, I at her request send to you, and grant for ever to the Church of Reading. I command you, therefore, to receive it with all veneration, and that you and your successors

take care to show it in the Church of Reading all possible honour and reverence as is due to so important a relic of so great an Apostle."

The Hand was enclosed in a shrine of gold, and many indulgences were granted to those visiting it. But the piety of one King was soon followed by the cynical greed of another and the gold shrine was conveyed away by Richard the First. For this the Abbey in the reign of King John was compensated by the grant of an annual one mark of gold ; changed by Henry the Third to an annual ten marks of silver. But the Hand seems later to have been given another golden shrine, for in a letter from Edward the Third to the Abbot of Reading in 1338, there is a reference to " a casket of pure gold for carrying relics, in the form of a little shrine, garnished with sapphires, oriental pearls, rubies and various other stones."

In the inventory of the Abbey's goods made at the suppression, appears " Item, Saynt James hande." It would seem that Hugh Faringdon, the last Abbot, succeeded in hiding away this prime relic, so that it was preserved when all others were destroyed ; for in 1786, when workmen were excavating in the eastern end of the Abbey ruins, for foundations for Reading gaol, they found among the flints and mortar a box containing, in the words of the account then written, " an embalmed hand . . . holding a slender rod (which had been) surmounted probably with a Crucifix, or some other emblematic device. . . . This relic, which still retains the fragrance of the embalming gum, first came into the possession of Dr. Blenkinsop, of Reading, who handed it over to Dr. Hooper," by whom it was presented to the Reading Museum. "When," wrote Fr. John Morris, a former rector of St. Peter's, Marlow, " I first saw the Hand of St. James,

it was under a glass on a mantel-shelf in a little Museum at Reading, between two specimens of dried fish. It was labelled 'The Hand of St. James,' and over it was an extract from Roger de Hoveden, giving in a few lines the history of its coming to Reading. The party of visitors to the Museum consisted of Mr. and the Hon^{ble}. Mrs. Scott-Murray, of Danesfield, Mr. Lewis Mackenzie, and myself, and the object of my visit was to see if it might be possible to get the relic into Catholic hands."

The little Museum eventually was broken up, and the Hand was acquired by Mr. Lewis Mackenzie for £30, in March 1855. Mr. Mackenzie took it to Scotland, showing it on his way, to the Fathers of the Birmingham Oratory. He expressed an intention of having a reliquary made, but he met his death by accidental poisoning, January 22nd, 1856. His brother, who was not a Roman Catholic, sold the Hand to Mr. Scott-Murray, for the sum his brother had paid, and the purchaser, on the sale of Danesfield House, presented it to the Roman Catholic church in Marlow, where it remains. It was first offered to the Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster, but was declined, on the score of its authenticity not being fully established.

Some have thought the Hand to be that of St. Anastasius, a seventh century Persian martyr. This was one of the known relics of Reading Abbey; and others have thought it to be a hand of Adelize, Queen of Henry the First, who was buried in the Abbey.

There is nothing wonderful in the so-called "incorrupt" Hand. As that of a body which had been preserved by embalming it would resist, as a matter of course, the ordinary processes of decay. It is a small and delicate hand, like that of a woman. Is this really a hand of one of those fishermen who were mend-

ing nets by the shore of the Sea of Galilee when the Saviour, passing by, called them to Him, to be fishers of men? Looking at the Hand, we well might doubt it, except that we know the hands of Orientals to be smaller than those of westerners.

BISHAM ABBEY

BISHAM ABBEY, on the Berkshire shore of the Thames, near Great Marlow, is one of our ancient conventual establishments whose buildings have been suffered to remain in part, and have been converted to form a residence. A stately and picturesque residence it is to-day, situated in pleasant wooded grounds, adjoining the ancient parish church.

Bisham, originally a preceptory of the Knights Templar, and later an establishment of Augustine monks, was a stately abbey in which some notable personages were laid to rest, chief among them that great historical figure, the forceful Nevill, Earl of Warwick, who was known as "The Kingmaker." He fell at last, after a stormy career, at the Battle of Barnet, 1471. Of his tomb, as of those of the other great ones, nothing is left : all were destroyed, together with the Abbey church, at the dissolution in the time of Henry Eighth.

What we find here now are the remaining portions of the domestic buildings, with their ancient gatehouse, at present forming the residence of the Vansittart-Neale family. Bisham Abbey was granted, together with many other properties, to the discarded queen, Anne of Cleves. From that slighted but well-endowed lady, the Abbey passed to the Hoby family, one of whom, Sir Thomas Hoby, was charged for a time, in the reign of Queen Mary, with the custody of the Princess Elizabeth.

Sir Thomas does not appear to have had much

leisure to enjoy this riverside retreat of his, after the accession of Elizabeth. He must needs have been a courtly and considerate custodian, for the queen, who had, as princess, been virtually his prisoner, looked with favour upon him, and employed him as ambassador to France, where he died, a very youthful ambassador, at the age of thirty-six.

Bisham Abbey has the reputation of being a "haunted house." It is in respect of the wife of Sir Thomas Hoby, the Lady Elizabeth, that this report became general. She was one of the four accomplished daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke, of Gidea Hall, near Romford, and married Sir Thomas Hoby in 1553. Her husband died in 1566, in Paris, as the epitaph on the monument of himself and his brother, Sir Philip, in Bisham Church, states. She married again in 1574, John, Lord Russell, who died ten years later. She died in 1609, aged eighty-one, and was laid beside her first husband.

Lady Hoby was a person of remarkable linguistic and other scholarly attainments. She wrote many books and composed religious treatises. So much is certainly known, and the story of the alleged haunting of Bisham Abbey, handed down from one generation to another, shows her completely in accord with this character. It readily can be understood that a highly-accomplished, and perhaps rather priggish, person such as Lady Hoby would not be likely to make sufficient allowance for the mistakes of a dull child, even her own, or the wilfulness of an idle one.

The story is that she was a cruel mother to her little boy William, who was slow at learning, and untidy with his copy-books. His pages were not those of which neat copy-books should be, but were torn and blotted, and Lady Hoby is said to have been in the

habit of severely chastising the boy, and one day, when the copy-books had been more than usually disfigured, she thrashed him so unmercifully that he died.

This story has long been current, and has been handed down for generations. The legend of the haunting seems to be almost equally old. It tells how the ghost of Lady Hoby may be seen gliding from a bed-room, apparently in the act of washing her hands of bloodstains.

A curious discovery, going a good way to confirm the story was made at Bisham Abbey many years ago. In course of some alterations, a sixteenth century window-shutter was removed, when a "packet of antique copy-books was discovered between the joists and the skirting, and several of these books, on which young Hoby's name was written, were covered with blots."

The rather daunting fact, however, is that Lady Hoby is recorded to have had but two sons, Edward and Thomas, both of whom grew up to manhood. By her second marriage she had a son, Francis, who died in infancy. Bisham remained in the Hoby family until 1766, when their descendant in the female line, Sir John Mill, held the estate. His widow sold it to the Vansittarts.

ABINGDON ABBEY

THE origin of the once great and proud mitred Abbey of Abingdon, one of the stateliest of the Benedictine monasteries, is so obscured by fantastic tales, whose extravagance cannot carry conviction, that is impossible to declare how it first actually came into being.

The town of Abingdon we find first mentioned in a charter of A.D. 699, where it is written "Abbandune": the meaning of which is that it was the hilltop defensible home, close by the present site of the town, of one Abba or Æbba, a not uncommon Saxon name.

The legends, on the other hand, tell us that the place owes its name to one "Aben," who, fleeing from the massacre of the British notables by Hengist, came here for refuge. The people of the place took pity upon him and built him a house and chapel, and thus arose, we are asked to believe, the first religious house at Abingdon! When we consider that this would involve so early a date as A.D. 457, we need have no scruple about dismissing the story as a fable of rather an absurd kind.

We hear no more of this mythical person, and are next taken on to more than two hundred years later—A.D. 675—when a somewhat less shadowy person, one Heane, nephew of Cissa, is said to have retired from the world to lead a religious life on the site of Aben's hermitage. But if that place had any actual existence, it certainly was not at Abingdon, but on Cumnor Hill.

His sister, Cilla, seems to have been the first to found a religious house on the site of what we call

“ Abingdon,” but which was at first more generally styled “ Helenstow,” from her convent of Holy Cross and St. Helena. The successor of her convent, the noble parish church of St. Helen, still stands here, by the riverside.

The story of Abingdon Abbey goes on to tell us, in terms of marvels, how Heane, building his monastery on “ Aberdon Hill,” could not understand how it was that what he had built in the daytime was found the next morning to be completely overthrown.

A hermit who lived in Cumnor Wood came and explained matters. He spoke of a vision in which he had seen men carting away the stones and timber. In his vision he had reproved them, when they answered : “ Go to Heane and tell him God wills it that a church shall not be built here, but at Seovechesham, where its place shall be marked out for him by a sign.”

The place of this name was land which had been given him by his uncle, Cissa. Down to it he went, and there already he found the furrows marked out where his monastery should be built. This, then, became the site of Abingdon Abbey.

The raiding Danes destroyed Heane’s monastery in A.D. 950 ; but five years later the monks returned and the Abbot Ethelwold rebuilt the church. In 1071 Egelwin, the last of the Saxon Bishops of Durham, who had taken part in the rebellion of Eadwin and Morcar against William the Conqueror, died here in prison. Faricius, an Italian, became Abbot in 1100, coming from Malmesbury Abbey. He began rebuilding the Abbey church, which seems not to have been completed until 1239. These buildings were nearly all replaced by vast new schemes of enlargement in the fifteenth century.

The last scene in the active life of this great monas-

tery was the surrender, February 23rd, 1539, by the Abbot, Thomas Pentecost, or Rowland, who, with his twenty-four monks, was duly pensioned. The annual value was £1,876 10s. 9d., equal in present value to about £34,000.

This great Abbey was important in itself, and in its



THE GUEST HOUSE DORMITORY, ABINGDON ABBEY

situation on what then was the chief route between the cloth-making towns of Gloucestershire and London. Travellers were many, and of every class, from the rich merchants to the poor wayfarers. Each in his degree sought hospitality at the Abbey ; the personages of rank, wealth, and consideration at the Abbot's own table, others in guest-houses appropriate to their class.

We have little, indeed, remaining of Abingdon Abbey, but a guest-house is one of its most notable relics. This is a long, barn-like building in two floors, the lower partly vaulted in stone, and the upper disclosing a timbered hall with an open gallery.

In this somewhat primitive structure, apparently, the poorer wayfarers must have rested. All, save the

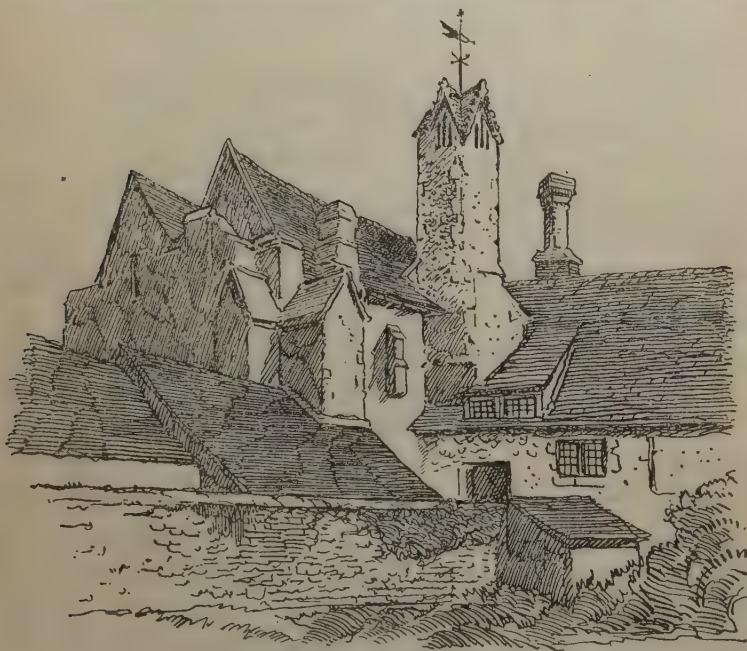


INTERIOR OF THE GUEST HOUSE OR DORMITORY,
ABINGDON ABBEY

poorest, were expected to make some return for their board and lodging; for this monastery, like many another, grew worldly. Even in early years the learned Benedictines, whose home it was, grew select and proud, for to Abingdon Abbey, William the Conqueror had entrusted the education of his son Henry—afterwards Henry the First. This was an education so superior to that generally then acquired by secular

personages that it gave that king the name by which he is known in history : "Beauclerc."

Ever a prosperous house, Abingdon Abbey was proud, and earned a bad reputation for tyrannical dealings with the town. The Abbots refused to permit the establishment of a market, and in 1327 the enmity thus caused resulted in a riot, the Mayor of Oxford



REMAINS OF ABINGDON ABBEY

and a number of scholars coming over to help the townsfolk of Abingdon in the quarrel. Part of the Abbey was burnt, the archives were destroyed, and the monks driven out.

But this was a sorry and merely a temporary victory, for the Abbot procured powerful assistance, and regained his place, and twelve of the rioters were hanged.

We obtain some insight upon the character of the monks of Abingdon from a little incident that has escaped the ravages of time. When the Franciscan friars first came to England, with their strict rule of poverty, their appearance greatly incensed the monks of all Orders, to whose laxity and easy way of living the friars were a reproach. To none more than to the monks of Abingdon was their coming more distasteful.

The first two of the Grey Friars who had landed in England, making for Oxford, lost their way, coming at last to one of the granges owned by Abingdon. With their ragged clothes and foreign gestures they were mistaken by the porter for jongleurs, and the prior and sacristan were delighted to see them, looking forward to a jolly evening.

When it was discovered that they had no jests to tell nor tricks to show, the monks were furious, kicked the friars from their gate, and left them to take refuge under a tree.

The whole of the Abbey church has disappeared, and modern buildings occupy most of its site. The domestic buildings, too, have been swept away, and all that is left is the Abbey gatehouse, now a part of the town hall, with a house incorporating what would seem to have been the prior's lodging. This preserves a curious and beautiful early English chimney in stone.

BEAULIEU ABBEY

AT the head of that beautiful and secluded sea-inlet called Beaulieu River, in Hampshire, westward of Southampton Water, stands the village of Beaulieu, amid delightful surroundings. Here was founded by King John, in 1204, a Cistercian Abbey whose buildings were completed in 1227.

The Abbey church appears to have been a noble one, for its length was 350 feet, but it was very soon completely swept away after the Dissolution, and only the site of it to-day is marked.

King John himself, had at one time expressed a wish to be buried here, but he lies in Worcester Cathedral.

Among the notables who found sanctuary here in times of trouble, were the Countess of Warwick, wife of the great "Kingmaker," and Margaret of Anjou, wife of the unhappy Henry the Sixth. At a later date, 1497, the rebel impostor, Perkin Warbeck, also found shelter here.

After the Dissolution, Beaulieu Abbey came into the hands of the Montagus, and is now the property of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, the third baron, a kinsman of the Duke of Montagu, whose dukedom became extinct in 1749. Large portions of the domestic buildings of the Abbey remain and are incorporated in the residence of Lord Montagu, styled "Palace House." The chief feature of it is the old Abbey gatehouse. The parish church, adjoining, is formed from the old refectory of the Abbey and runs north and south, instead of east and west. The beautiful refectory

pulpit, a work of the Early English period, from which one of the brethren of the monastery was accustomed to read homilies on the sins of gluttony and drunkenness while the monks ate their frugal meals, is approached by a staircase in the wall, within a lovely arcade of pointed arches and Purbeck marble columns.

The grounds of "Palace House," which takes its



THE REFECTORY PULPIT, BEAULIEU ABBEY

name from the olden palatine rank of the Dukes of Montagu, are surrounded by strong and defensible walls, built by John, the second duke, about 1730. He was in continual dread lest the French should send a raiding expedition across the Channel and up the Beaulieu River to burn his residence and kidnap him. The especial reason for this fear was that the French had a very great and quite understandable dislike of him, as the proprietor of the West Indian islands of St. Lucia and St. Vincent, which George the Second

had conferred upon him ; these islands not having been in the King's gift at all, but French possessions. His Grace did not, however, derive any revenue from the islands thus granted to him. They were, it is true, granted, but the French held them, and when the duke fitted out and dispatched an expedition to seize the isles, it was completely defeated. He lost forty thousand pounds over that affair. But he was a man of ideas, and conceived a grand scheme for a town and port, half-way up the Beaulieu River, to be called "Montagu Town." The site of this proposed settlement is the hamlet of Buckler's Hard, by the waterside. Here the duke induced a firm of shipbuilders to settle from Bursledon in 1743 ; and here for many years, until the first decade of the nineteenth century had passed, many vessels, including ships for the Navy, were built and launched. The last vessel of any size to leave the slips here was the *Lady Hannah Ellis*, a West Indiaman, launched in 1812. So late, however, as 1818, a small Revenue cutter, the *Repulse*, was built at Buckler's Hard. Since that date the shipwright's hammer has been silent ; and "Montagu Town" never really came into being. To-day Buckler's Hard is a quiet spot ; a double row of old red-brick houses, set at right angles to the river. Beaulieu village is itself by comparison a place of life and bustle, for it is largely visited by parties to see the ruins of the Abbey.

BATH ABBEY

STANDING in the very centre of the city of Bath, the Abbey church, which really partakes of the character of a cathedral, being conjoined in the episcopal title of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, is the most prominent building in this ancient City of the Healing Springs. Bath was already ancient and of great fame when John de Villula, in Norman times, purposing to make this the capital of a Bishop's See, set about building a vast church which was twice as lengthy as we see the Abbey church to-day.

Villula's project fell through, and Wells became the Cathedral city, and thus, not merely did the town of Bath decay during the Middle Ages, but with it also, as a matter of course, the great ambitious Norman Church. Nothing, save the basis of some columns beneath the floor-level of the Abbey church, now is left of Villula's structure.

The present Abbey church stands in a situation more Continental in character than English, for not merely is it in the very centre of the city, but it is surrounded by a paved yard and fringed by shops and neighboured by the municipal buildings. Whichever way you come into Bath, you cannot fail to be impressed by the noble central tower of the Abbey ; but how few there are who notice that this lofty tower is by no means square ; being, in fact, lengthier on plan between east and west than on north and south.

The rebuilding of Bath Abbey was a very late enterprise ; being, in fact, undertaken in 1495 by

Bishop Oliver King, who had a vision in which he was commanded by a voice to restore the long-ruined fane. In his vision he saw angels ascending and descending a ladder, while the voice said : " Let an Olive establish a crown, and a King restore the church." It was very late in the history and progress of the world for bishops to have such visions, which, common enough centuries earlier, had in the course of ages grown scarce.

But Bishop King set actively about the work ; and, boldly sculptured on the piers flanking the great west front, you see, extending almost from the ground to the turrets, representations of that ladder. These are Jacob's Ladders, with the angels duly ascending and descending. Time has dealt severely with them and weathered away their wings and heads, but enough remains to show the original intention.

The good Bishop's vision seems to have been in 1495, and his building operations appear to have begun in 1499. He proceeded rapidly with it, but it was still unfinished when the dissolution of the religious houses took place, under Henry the Eighth. But a desire arose worthily to complete the church for the city's use ; and so in 1572 work was resumed. It was finished about 1609, and thus presents an interesting example of post-Reformation Gothic architecture. The style is, of course, Perpendicular, that last phase of Gothic tradition, and the great building presents every mark of great skill in construction, with exceedingly small wall-spaces and huge windows. It is thus, with these enormous windows, one of the best-lighted of churches.

Apart from this constructional feature, the most remarkable aspect of the interior of the Abbey is the vast number of monuments that cover its walls, chiefly wall-tablets of a moderate size. They are the memorials mostly of private residents of Bath, who, coming here

originally for their health, elected to stay and live in these pleasant surroundings. They include great numbers of retired Service men and East Indian and Colonial officials, most of them, to judge by their epitaphs, models of conduct and virtue, and paragons of wit and learning.

Westminster Abbey alone can rival in number the monuments in Bath Abbey, which led a wit to write :
“ These walls, adorned with monument and bust,
Show how Bath’s waters serve to lay the dust.”

MALMESBURY ABBEY

THE ancient town of Malmesbury is situated in the north-western angle of Wiltshire, on a height almost encircled by that one of the many rivers called "Avon" which flows into the Bristol Channel. When you come into this little, old-world town of Malmesbury, you cannot help but notice the great Abbey, whose vast ruined bulk stands up against the sky to the northward of the market place. The town of Malmesbury grew up around the great Abbey, which dates its original foundation back to A.D. 640. That is, however, not by any means the Abbey whose ruins we now see, but a primitive hermitage where there had settled a certain Maildolph, an Irish missionary, in these then wild, forestal regions.

For an account of those early days we are indebted to that learned monk, William of Malmesbury, who flourished here in the twelfth century, and died in 1142. Unlike most of the monkish chroniclers, he was more of a historian than a credulous collector of fables, and he is generally held to be painstaking and reliable.

According to him, Maildolph's retreat became a primitive kind of monastery, but so primitive indeed that its brethren had scarce sufficient on which to support existence. To their religious house of hunger and short commons, Ina, King of the West Saxons, sent his nephew, Aldhelm, to study; and, presumably, at the same time he must have improved the conditions of life here. Aldhelm is said to have studied under Maildolph, whose sanctity and repute for learning were

such that the place, which up to that time had been named by the British "Caer Bladon," and by the Saxons "Ingelburne," took a new name from him, "Maildulph's-burg." The Venerable Bede accepts



THE WEST FRONT, MALMESBURY ABBEY

this origin of the place-name. Maildulph was succeeded as first abbot by his pupil, Aldhelm, in A.D. 672.

Maildulph had been a monk of the old original British Christian Church, which had survived in

Ireland, Scotland, and the West of England, although paganism in other parts had overthrown it in the Saxon invasions. Aldhelm, however, followed the rule of the Roman Church, as laid down by Augustine, who had re-Christianised England in the years A.D. 596-605.

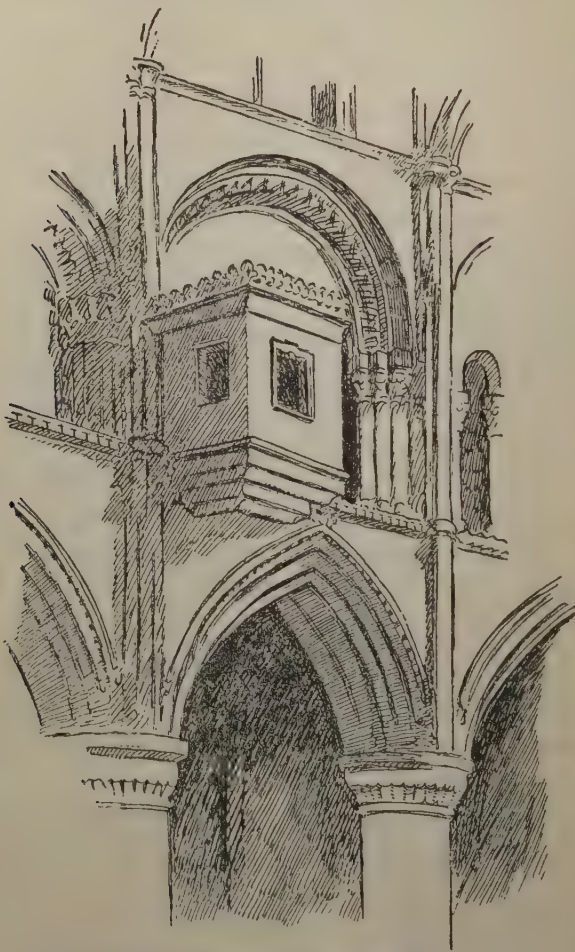
Under Aldhelm's rule the monastery at Malmesbury flourished exceedingly. He was the first Saxon Churchman who really acquired learning. He wrote Latin and was deeply read, was a master of music, and, in general, a greatly cultivated personage. He was abbot for thirty years, and Bishop of Sherborne, and died A.D. 709. The Church of Rome canonised him, and as St. Aldhelm, his relics were enclosed in silver by King Ethelwulf and formed the most sacred possession of the Abbey of those times.

But these were yet early days. Malmesbury rose to greater things in A.D. 941, when King Athelstan conferred upon the town privileges it yet enjoys, and gave to the Abbey lands and relics of great moment, such as a piece of the True Cross, a fragment of the Crown of Thorns, and the sword of Constantine, enclosing a nail of the Passion. These sacred relics, together with the Holy Lance, had been brought to him out of France, eleven years earlier, and were regarded as a great acquisition.

The famous St. Dunstan gave an organ for love of St. Aldhelm; and the Benedictine Abbey, as it then became, was as magnificently equipped as any religious house of that day. But that was a comparatively simple time, architecturally, and it was not long after the Norman Conquest that a complete rebuilding was undertaken. What we now see of the Abbey church are the remains of what then, and in the next century, was done.

Although it might well be thought that the ruined

portions of the Abbey church are wholly the results of the destruction of the monastery in the time of Henry the Eighth, that is not the complete story.



THE WATCHING-LOFT, MALMESBURY ABBEY

Some of the damage caused, and never repaired, was done by the fall of later and heavy ornate works, built up on walls not strong enough to carry them. Thus in the fourteenth century a central tower was heightened

and a spire added. These fell, and the like happened when an added western tower crashed and destroyed a part of the nave.

But when the Abbey was surrendered, on December 15th, 1539, by the last Abbot, Robert Frampton, and his twenty-one monks, the Abbey church was yet magnificent, and measured three hundred and twenty-six feet in length. The annual value was then stated to be £830. The buildings were granted to Sir Edward Baynton, who sold them for £1,117 15s. 11d. to one William Stumpe, a wealthy clothier of the town. Stumpe was a practical, irreverent, and an unsentimental person. He pulled down the whole of the choir and part of the transepts, and sold the materials. He set up his looms in and about the south transept, and he lived in the western tower. The old parish church of St. Paul was ruinous, and so what he had spared of the Abbey church he gave to the town for a parish church.

Thus it is that to-day the great bulk of this building, impressive though it be, is in the distant view just a lump. The western view, with the remains of the tower that fell, is the more picturesque. Great though the building be, it once was two-thirds larger, and must have been extremely grand.

The most elaborate portion of the church is the Norman south porch, a work of extreme richness and elaboration, sculptured with a profusion of scenes from Scripture history. The choir and entire eastern part of the Abbey church have disappeared, and of the nave, six only of the nine bays are in use.

LACOCK ABBEY

WHEN the religious houses came to their last days and were dissolved, in the reign of that "Defender of the Faith," Henry the Eighth, a curious variety of fate befell them and their possessions. Some, most fortunate of all, were elevated by King and Parliament into the cathedral churches of newly-constituted sees. We do not, because we have either never learned, or have forgotten, ever to think of Gloucester, Bristol, or Chester Cathedrals as other than they are now; but they were Abbey churches in the olden days. The great Benedictine Abbey of Shrewsbury, now a parish church, was one of those designated to be a cathedral, and an Act of Parliament actually was drafted for the purpose, but it was never passed.

Other Abbey churches have survived, wholly or in part, because of their having been purchased by the inhabitants of the towns in which they are situated for use as parish churches, and others yet, purchased by private individuals of wealth, have survived in an oddly secularised form, being converted into residential mansions.

Throughout the country may be found, among "the stately homes of England," a good many examples of Abbey churches, or their domestic buildings, remodelled in this way, and still styled, rather shamelessly and unblushingly, as we must needs think, when we consider their change of use, "Abbey."

Among the Abbeys upon which this singular change has descended is that convent of Augustinian nuns,



LACOCK ABBEY

Lacock Abbey, in Wiltshire. This community was founded by Ela, daughter and heiress of the Earl of Salisbury, who had died, leaving no son. Ela was the greatest heiress of her time in England, and thus a very desirable match, even for a king's son ; and thus she was married in 1198 to one of Henry the Second's and Fair Rosamund's progeny, William Longespee, who thus became, in the way of doing things at that time, Earl of Salisbury.

He died in 1226, and you may see his tomb to this day in Salisbury Cathedral, and that of his and the Countess Ela's son, another William Longespee, or "Longsword," he who fell in Palestine, in the Crusades, in 1247, to which he had gone with the blessing of his then widowed mother.

The Countess Ela was remarkable as a foundress ; she founded her convent at Lacock in the morning of a day in April, 1232, and the Carthusian Abbey of Hinton Charterhouse in the afternoon. Six years later she became a nun in her own convent at Lacock, and in another two years she was Abbess—an office she resigned in 1257. At length, in 1261, she died and was laid to rest in the choir of her own Abbey church.

Lacock Abbey stands in a beautiful situation in the valley of the Wiltshire Avon. There the river flows through pleasant meads, much as when this holy lady established her Abbey here, in the meadow then called by the not very romantic but curious name of "Snaylesmede."

The history of Lacock Abbey is uneventful, and at last it was surrendered quietly to the King's Commissioners, when the annual value appears to have been between £160 and £194. The Abbey and its lands then became the property of Sir William Sharington, on June 16th, 1540. He pulled down the Abbey church,

of which nothing remains, and converted the domestic buildings into the noble residence we now see. This, with his additional works, including a tower, incorporates the Early English chapter-house and sacristy ; the nuns' dayroom, with dormitory over, 138 feet in length ; the refectory, the muniment-room, and the cloisters. The rest is no more.

The Sharingtons were succeeded in the ownership of Lacock by the Talbots, who still own it. It was brought into the Talbot family by Olive, daughter and heiress of the second of the Sharingtons.

It is an interesting incident that here lived W. H. Fox Talbot, born 1800, one of the inventors of photography, called in his time " Talbotype."

The considerable village and little old market town of Lacock, which owed its existence wholly to the Abbey, is on a branch route of the Bath Road, and is the most picturesque village in Wiltshire.

BUCKLAND ABBEY

IN the parish of Buckland Monachorum, in the extreme west of Devon, near Horrabridge, once stood the Cistercian Abbey of Buckland, which was founded in 1278 by the Countess Amicia, widow of Baldwin de Redvers, seventh Earl of Devon. The chronicles of this abbey, while yet it remained as such, are scanty and of but little outstanding interest. It was leased at the dissolution to one John Pollard, who in 1541 was succeeded by Sir Richard Grenville, of Bideford, to whom Henry the Eighth made a grant of the Abbey buildings and lands.

The Grenvilles, or Greenfields, of Bideford, were an ancient, but as yet not a particularly distinguished family. What Sir Richard did with the Abbey buildings we do not know. Probably he left them in much the same condition as they were when they came into his possession. It was left to his grandson, another Sir Richard, to demolish most of the Abbey and to remodel what he spared, to serve him as a stately country residence. But this was not merely "another" Sir Richard; he was the famous Sir Richard Grenville, the admiral, one of the great Elizabethan sea-dogs of Devon, who ended his career tragically but gloriously in his ship *Revenge*, which he fought to the last at Flores, in the Azores, against the Spaniards, outnumbered but refusing to surrender.

Long before that time, however, he had sold Buckland. He already had given distinguished service to his country when he succeeded to the property and

at great cost remodelled the Abbey to his secular use; and he appears to have considered his active service already done. We well may judge this to have been his frame of mind when we gaze upon the elaborate plaster decoration in the hall in which, on a frieze, is seen the representation of the Tree of Life. On its branches hangs the shield of a knight who sits quietly in the shade, his armour discarded and his horse standing idly by. A skull and an hour-glass—those



BUCKLAND ABBEY

grim reminders of which the Renaissance period of art is so full—occupy the seated warrior's reflections.

The date 1576, seen on the fireplace in the hall, gives the actual year in which this work was done. It is a noble hall, with a curiously effective floor of alternate white limestone and red tile. This hall was originally part of the nave of the Abbey church. North and south of it were the transepts, which he pulled down.

Where the high altar stood in the choir, is the hall-screen, with approach to the servants' part of the

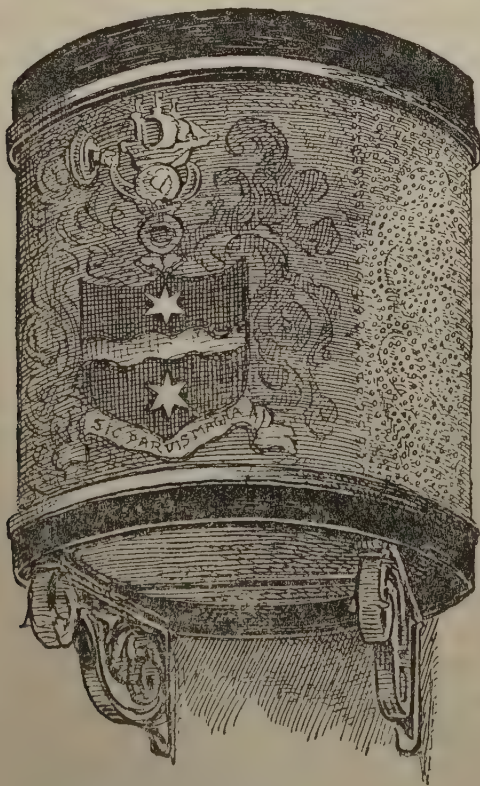
present house, the kitchen and other offices being formed out of the domestic buildings of the monastery. The smoking-room was originally a chapel on the eastern side of the north transept.

In 1580 Sir Richard Grenville sold the house he had with such care and expense fashioned for his years of retirement, and was again a man of action. Indeed, his renewed activities, as the right-hand man of Drake in the defeat of the Armada in 1588, and his death in the battle off Flores in 1591, have given him the greater title to fame than have his earlier exploits.

The two persons to whom he sold the property resold it in less than a year later to Sir Francis Drake for £3,400. Drake already was a made man. He had returned from his long voyage round the world and had been knighted by Queen Elizabeth on board his ship, the *Golden Hind*, and had been granted that wonderful achievement of arms which, it is obvious, was one of the few works at Buckland Abbey that he added. That coat-of-arms is displayed in plaster-work on the wall of the tower-room. Drake early became a great man in Devon, long before the defeat of the Spanish Armada set him on a world pinnacle of renown. He was Mayor of Plymouth in 1581, and gave the town its water supply by bringing it down from twenty-seven miles inland. He left Buckland and England for the last time, in 1595, on an expedition against the Spaniards, and died at sea in 1596, on January 28th, off the coast of South America.

"Drake's Drum" is famous in legend and poetry. It stands on a bracket beside the fireplace in the hall. That curious passion for having a pair of anything has led to an entirely unauthentic copy of the original being made, to occupy a similar position on the other side of the fireplace. The mystically-minded folk of

the West of England long ago elevated Drake to the proud position of a champion of England : a kind of latter-day King Arthur, in fact. Both he and that figure of remote legends will, it is thought, return in the hour of England's gravest danger, and the roll of " Drake's Drum " then shall be heard.



DRAKE'S DRUM, BUCKLAND ABBEY

This is a remarkable drum, painted with Drake's elaborate coat-of-arms, consisting of " a fesse wavy, between two pole-stars argent, on a field sable." That is to say, in non-technical language, two silver pole-stars on a black ground.

The crest is even more remarkable : a terrestrial globe supporting a ship under full sail, with a golden hawser flung about it by a hand appearing out of a cloud, on the cloud being the words " Auxilio Divino," and on the advance bulwark of the ship is a red dragon looking at the hand. The motto beneath the shield reads : " Sic parvis magna."

On Drake's death, Buckland Abbey came to his younger brother, Thomas. He died in 1606, and was succeeded by his son Francis, created, in 1622, by Charles the First a baronet. He died in 1637, and was followed by his son Francis, who was active in the Civil War on the side of the Parliament. During a period of Royalist successes, in 1644, Buckland Abbey was captured and was granted, oddly enough, to the then Sir Richard Grenville, and the Drakes were for a time ruined.

But not for long. In 1646 Buckland was recaptured, after a fierce fight. Sir Francis died two years after the Restoration of Charles the Second, and was succeeded by his nephew, yet another Francis. The next, the fourth and fifth baronets, both were named Francis Henry. In 1794 the fifth baronet died, and, having no children, Buckland Abbey came to his nephew, the second Lord Heathfield, an Elliott. Hence his descendants, who still own this historic house, are Elliott-Drakes.

CLEEVE ABBEY

Two miles from the little town and port of Watchet, on the coast of Somerset, are the ruins of the Cistercian Abbey of St. Mary de Cleeve, or Clive—that is to say, St. Mary of the Cliff. The Abbey church itself has wholly disappeared, and the materials of it were distributed over the countryside for such useful purposes as building farmsteads, cow-barns, and the like. But very interesting and extensive ranges of the Abbey domestic buildings are yet standing.

This once proud and beautiful Abbey was founded in 1188, by one William de Romane, of whom we know little else than that he was of the family of the Earls of Lincoln of that period. The Abbey stood, after the manner of all Cistercian abbeys, in a pleasant vale, made fertile by the unremitting toil of those farmer-like monks and their lay-brethren.

The Cistercians or “Bernardines,” as some styled them, stood more for simplicity and for practical agriculture and sheep and wool raising than for learning. As a new order of monks, the Cistercians were open to the jibes and jealousies of the long-established Benedictines and others; for those eminently worldly failings were by no means unknown in the churches and the cloisters of the monasteries.

They made no pretence to scholarship, those Cistercian monks, and their abbeys, beautiful as they were, had no undue elaboration. In the churches of the other orders the Rood was as ornate and of as costly materials as possible. The Cistercian monks,

however, bearing in mind that our Saviour suffered upon a cross of wood, placed a crucifix of plain wood in their churches ; and throughout their buildings they conducted themselves as the sanctified farmers they really were ; absenting themselves even from their services in the strenuous times of harvest.

If it be true—and it is a noble article of faith—that to labour is to pray, then the early Cistercians prayed well ; for with all the power that was given them they brought the rough lands under cultivation and tended and improved stock, and helped the world along in their especial way towards the distant ideal.

But as time went on, and the Cistercians, in common with the other monastic orders, acquired properties by the gifts of benefactors, they, too, led a less simple life, and their Abbots became grand seigneurs, with hunting-lodges and retinues. As landlords, the abbeys became more grasping than secular persons, and they earned a hatred which, when the question of ending all the monastic establishments came up, under Henry the Eighth, made the dissolution of them the easier. It has been calculated that, towards the close of their existence, the abbeys and priories established in England owned nearly three-quarters of the land.

Cleeve Abbey derived its name from the swelling hills in the district where it stood ; “ Cleeve ” or “ Clive ” meaning not only a cliff but also any bold hill. The word is found in the place-names of Clevedon, in Somerset, in Cliveden, on the Thames, and elsewhere. In the name of Barton-le-Clay, in Bedfordshire, is an instance of “ Clive ” being corrupted into an altogether different meaning.

Although only the ground-plan of the Abbey church of Cleeve remains, showing it to have been a building 161 feet in length, and of the transitional period

between the Norman and the Early English styles of architecture, the domestic buildings are in very fair preservation, when we consider their use by many generations of farmers as hay, straw, and corn lofts.

The cloister-garth was, until one of the Luttrells of Dunster, the owners, cleared it, about 1865, a typical farmyard. The approach is over a two-arched Gothic bridge and through a gatehouse built in the transitional Decorated to Perpendicular period. The upper part was the work of William Dovell, the last Abbot. It bears the hospitable inscription :

“ Porta patens esto
Nulli claudaris honesto.”

This may be translated and metrically rendered :

“ Gate open be,
To honest men all free.”

Literally, it is “ Gate, be open ; and be closed to no honest man.” This was with the Cistercians a favourite threshold invitation ; but the corruption and sloth that marked them in later ages, in common with other orders, led to a double meaning being fastened upon the Latin phrase, alike in England and in France. It was said that one of the Abbots, or, at least, one of the brethren of a Cistercian abbey, carved the Latin inscription with a comma in the wrong place, thus :

“ Porta patens esto nulli,
Claudaris honesto.”

This disastrously alters the meaning to :

“ Gate, open be to none,
Closed to the honest man.”

The finest of the remaining portions of Cleeve Abbey's domestic buildings are the monks' refectory and the Chapter-house, with the monks' dormitory above. The Chapter-house and dormitory building on the left are of the Early English period ; the refectory on the right, distinguished by its upper range and large traceried windows, is of a later era : the Perpendicular period, about 1420.

TINTERN ABBEY

FIVE miles from Chepstow, and eleven from Monmouth, on the loveliest reach of the beautiful river Wye, stand the grey ruins of the Abbey of Tintern, dedicated as were all the Abbey churches of the Cistercians to St. Mary.

As you come into Tintern village, preferably from Chepstow, you see the Abbey rising in perfect grace, from the level pastures and orchards on which it was built, in midst of a country of great hills. The contrast is eloquent to a degree.

The road from Chepstow is a fine road. It runs for a great distance parallel with the Wye, on this Monmouthshire shore, and at a considerably higher level than the meadows ; so that the pilgrim, looking down upon the right, sees the Abbey, much as some low-flying bird might, in one all-comprehending glance.

It was in 1131 that Tintern Abbey was founded, by Walter de Clare, and lands were given to it by Walter Fitz Richard, Lord of Striguil, as Chepstow then often was styled.

The Cistercians, the White Monks, then were new in the land. They were an Order formed by a break-away from the Benedictines, and originated at Citeux, in Normandy. Actually their first religious house was at Waverley, established near Farnham, in Surrey, in 1128 ; three years earlier.

The Cistercians loved, as sites for their monasteries, the vales and the meadows, unlike the Benedictines, who generally chose the heights. Not indeed, that



TINTERN ABBEY FROM THE WYE

when the Cistercian monasteries first arose the meadows were there. Those monks came into the wilds, as their rule enjoined, to places " remote from the traffic of men "; and in those places the lands that were given them were, in those years of so long ago, uncultivated.

It was the Cistercian monks who brought the wilds



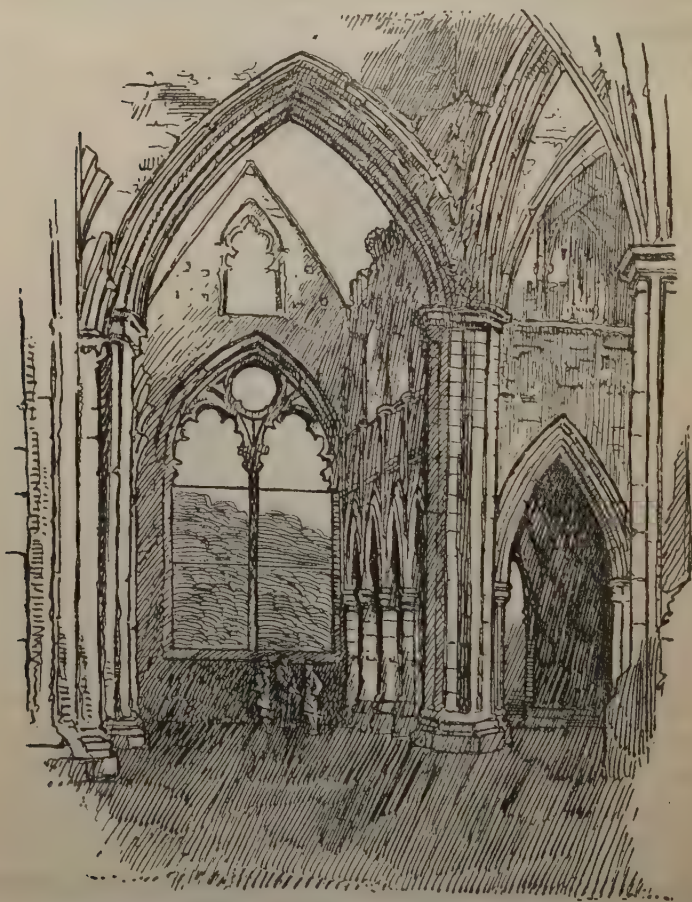
TOMB SLAB OF AN ABBOT, TINTERN

into cultivation. To them, in the first place, is due the stretch of lovely pastures and the orchards that still form a setting for the ruins of Tintern.

The road past the Abbey did not come into existence until long after their time ; and Tintern was then, in fact, " remote from the traffic of men."

The Cistercians were not a learned body, like the

Benedictines. They were farmers, who had a special bent for sheep-farming for the sake of wool, which they successfully marketed, and so helped to maintain themselves. Sometimes they did that with difficulty,



TINTERN ABBEY : THE CHOIR LOOKING EAST

for although the Abbey of Tintern had been accorded numerous rights and privileges, such as freedom from certain tolls, and the rights of quarrying, and tree-felling, and the gift of a mine in the Forest of Dean ;

together with the liberty of grazing forty mares in that forest, it was never a wealthy abbey. So when a whole year's shearing of wool had to be rendered towards paying for the ransom of King Richard the First, and another year's wool for other purposes on his return home, the position of the White Monks here must for a time, have been not particularly enviable.

No romance of history can be told of Tintern. The annals of this Cistercian house were as simple as were the lives of its brethren. Once only, when the fugitive King, Edward the Second, sought and obtained shelter here was the calm current of their lives disturbed. They feared being involved in the troubles surrounding that unhappy monarch ; but no ill results happened to them from his unwelcome visit.

The domestic records of the monastery perished after the siege and destruction of Raglan Castle in 1646, where, after having become the property of the Marquis of Worcester, they had been housed. It was to the then Earl of Worcester that the Abbey and the Abbey lands had been granted after Richard Wyche, the last Abbot, had surrendered the establishment to the Commissioners of Henry the Eighth. But although in the disappearance of those records we no doubt have lost much interesting history of the internal affairs of the Abbey, history of the larger sort never seems to have touched Tintern.

It possessed one famed object, a miraculous figure of the Virgin Mary, on the wall of the inner-gatehouse. Devout folks made pilgrimage to it, and in 1414 a Papal indulgence was granted to all who should make such a visit, and contribute towards the repair of the Abbey buildings. Of famous shrines and relics, Tintern Abbey would seem to have possessed none.

The original buildings were in 1270-87 replaced

by an entirely new Abbey church ; that whose roofless mass we see to-day. It is a specimen of the Early English style at its purest, and in its complete development, before merging into that next phase of Gothic architecture, the " Decorated " period.



ENTRANCE TO TINTERN ABBEY

It would easily be possible to reinstate the Abbey, for it is a " ruin " only in so far as it is roofless. The walls still rise to their original height, and the greatest destruction was the fall of the north nave-arcade, and the loss of most of the tracery from the windows.

The domestic buildings of the monastery have, however, almost wholly disappeared, and only the water-gate remains.

It was about 1898 that the Abbey was purchased from the Duke of Beaufort, direct descendant of the Marquis of Worcester, by the Woods and Forests Department of the Government ; and the Office of Works has carefully repaired the fabric, cutting away the ivy and replacing fallen stones ; while some cottages built upon the Abbey precincts have been removed. It is intended to remove others in course of time, when the old tenants have passed away. It was a condition made by the Duke of Beaufort at the sale that the tenants should be allowed to remain for the term of their lives, if they so wished.

ABBEYDORE ABBEY

IN a lovely vale of Monmouthshire stand the remains of the Cistercian Abbey of Abbeydore, founded in 1147 by Robert of Ewyas, youngest son of Harold, after whom the neighbouring village of Ewyas Harold is named. In mediæval times, and until its suppression, this once stately abbey was the most important in the marches of Wales, and the place where for choice the wealthiest nobles of this region were laid to rest.

It ended, with the lesser monasteries, in 1534, and for a hundred years became the stone quarry from which the farmers and yeomen of the district took their building materials. In that way disappeared the nave, cloisters, and domestic buildings, and it was not until 1634 that John, Viscount Scudamore, a descendant of the Scudamores to whom Henry the Eighth had granted the abbey lands, restored the remaining portion to religious uses by re-roofing the roofless choir.

Shorn of all save that lovely choir, transepts of two buildings, and striking ambulatory, in which last the peculiar arrangement of the white monks, in screening off the most sacred parts of the building from the lay-brothers, is seen, the abbey remains a fine example of Early English architecture of the most beautiful type. It is now the parish church.

The name of Abbeydore involves a story in itself. The Abbey stands in what is now called the Golden Valley, watered by the river Dore. It is quite a little stream, this so-called "river," but it has made fertile

all this lengthy vale that runs for ten miles from Dorstone to this spot.

Partly from its fertility, but still more from a con-



THE AMBULATORY, ABBEYDORE

fusion of thought brought about in a clash between two different languages, this valley takes its name. The Welsh word "dwr," for "water," originally applied

to the stream, was heard by the Normans when they came into these parts, and to them it sounded exactly like the expression "D'or," in their own language. The Abbey of Val D'or was the official title of the monastery, and from this Norman-French to the English rendering, "Golden Valley," was but an obvious and easy step.

It would seem that the completion of the Abbey was not an easy matter, for in 1260, a hundred and thirteen years after its foundation, it was found necessary to make an appeal to that end.

The Bishop of Hereford, Peter of Aquablanca, was then prepared to grant indulgences to all who would make gifts ; and it would seem that many took advantage of the offer, for in the time of his successor, Thomas Cantelupe, 1275-1282, the Abbey church was finished, and finally consecrated.

We learn something of the domestic history of Abbeydore from Giraldus Cambrensis. Gerald of Wales was a churchman who lived between the years 1147 and 1222 ; Archdeacon of Brecon, and a prolific writer on monastic affairs, and severe critic of the various monastic orders. He especially disliked the Cistercians, accusing them, as did many other writers of his time and later, of hard dealing and commercial, rather more than religious, policy. Abbot Adam, of Dore, he says, obtained by false pretences grants of land from the King.

For some reason which has not come down to us, Stephen, an abbot elected in 1257, was deposed from his office in 1263. The Precentor of Hereford, writing to Abbot Henry, successor of the deposed one, offered a palfrey to the new Abbot if he would exercise precautions that Stephen, imprisoned in the Abbey, should not be ill-treated ; but we do not know, either, whether

the palfrey was accepted, or what happened to the incarcerated Abbot.

The Viscount Scudamore, who, in the early part of the seventeenth century, restored the remaining portion of the Abbey church and fitted it as a parochial place of worship, was exceedingly busy in that way in all these parts of Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire ; and was a very thorough Royalist and a High Churchman.

A beautiful carved oak chancel-screen very highly enriched, stretches across the breadth of the chancel-arch. It was the work of that famous Herefordshire architect of the time, who was given the title of ' King's Carpenter ' (the term " architect " was not then generally known), John Abel, who worked almost wholly in timber, and in that material built many of the market-houses in these parts.

The Abbey church contains one of those heart-shrines frequently found in ancient churches. This is that of a Bishop of Hereford, John de Bruton, 1268-1275.

LLANTHONY PRIORY

THE so-called "Abbey" of Llanthony owes its origin to one William de Lacey, a knight and kinsman of the powerful Hugh de Lacey, Earl of Hereford, in the time of William the Second : "Rufus," the Red King. It was in the year 1088 that he came riding this way, awed by the great heights of the Skyrriid Fawr, or "Holy Mountain," and the gloomy peaks of the Black Mountains. He saw woody solitudes, fissured rocks, and in the vale the bright and sparkling stream, the Honddu, rushing southwards on its way to join the Usk at what we call Brecon, but known to the Welsh as "Aberhonddu." The scene was not, however, so awe-inspiring or so gloomy but what it impressed him with a deep-seated desire there to live and die, and to found, in these scenes, remote from the stress and strife to which he had been accustomed a religious house, dedicated to abstinence and poverty.

Another had already been here, and, inspired by like thoughts, had built himself a hermitage : none other indeed than St. David, the patron saint of Wales.

But St. David had long been dead, and his hermitage was merely a heap of ruins. Yet the spot was, so far, sanctified ; and de Lacey established himself by it. In the very name of Llanthony lies hidden its history, for that is a debased form of the original Welsh : "Llan Dewi Nant Honddu" : that is to say, "The Church of St. David on the River Honddu." If we pronounce "Honddu" as do the Welsh, "Honthy,"

we shall get some inkling of how the compact later name of " Llanthony " came about.

Llanthony Priory (for such it became) was a monastery of Black Augustine Canons. It had, as so many religious houses had, its literary monk and historian, who tells us picturesquely how de Lacey " laid aside his soldier's belt and girded himself with a rope ; instead of fine linen, he covered himself with hair-cloth ; and instead of his soldier's robe, he loaded himself with weighty iron. The suit of armour which aforetime had guarded him against the darts of the enemy he still wore, as a garment to harden him against the soft temptations of his old enemy, Satan. So, as the outward man was afflicted by austerity, the inner man might be secured to the service of God. That his zeal might not cool, he thus crucified himself, and continued his hard armour on his body until it was worn out with rust and age."

De Lacey was joined years after, by Ernesti, chaplain of Queen Maud (the " good Queen Maud " of Henry the First). In 1108 they built the first chapel : a small and humble place, which William de Lacey's great kinsman erected into an Augustine Priory. Then would-be other benefactors offered gifts of money and land ; which, however, these two brethren declined, choosing rather to " dwell poor in the House of God." So earnest were they in their desire for poverty that they continually offered up prayers against wealth ; deprecating the acquisition of it as a misfortune.

But, says the monkish historian : " their pious resolution was speedily overcome by the arts of a woman. Queen Maud, not sufficiently acquainted with the sanctity and disinterestedness of William, once desired to put her hand into his bosom, and when he, with great modesty, submitted to her im-

portunity, she conveyed a large purse of gold between his coarse shirt and iron bodice ; and thus by a pleasant and innocent subtlety administered some comfortable relief to him. But, oh ! his wonderful contempt of the world ! He displayed a rare example, that the truest happiness consists in little or nothing ! He complied, indeed, but unwillingly, and only with a view that the Queen might employ her devout liberality in adorning the church."

And so arose the great Priory church and monastery of Llanthony. William de Lacey perhaps died cognisant that the spell was broken, and that his ideal of a life of poverty and contemplation could not be maintained after him.

The Llanthony monk continues, describing the buildings whose Norman ruins we now see :— " There stands in a deep valley a conventual church entrusted to promote true religion, beyond almost all the churches in England : quiet for contemplation, and retired for conversation with the Almighty. Here the sorrowful complaints of the oppressed do not disquiet ; the mad contentions of the froward do not disturb, but a calm peace and perfect charity invite to holy religion and banish discord. But why do I describe the situation of the place, when all things are so much changed since its first establishment ? The broken rocks were traversed by herds of wild and swift-footed animals ; these rocks surrounded and darkened the valley, for they were crowned by tall, towering trees, which yielded a delightful prospect at a great distance, to all beholders. The middle of the valley, although clothed with woods, and sunk in a narrow and deep abyss, was sometimes disturbed by a strong, blighting wind ; at other times obscured with dark clouds and violent rains ; incommoded with severe frosts, or



LLANTHONY " ABBEY "

heaped up with snow ; whilst in other places there was a mild and gentle air. The large and plentiful springs from the neighbouring mountains fell with a pleasant murmur into a river in the midst of the valley, abounding with fish. Sometimes, after great rains, which were extremely frequent, the floods, impatient of control, inundated the neighbouring places, overturning rocks and tearing up trees by the roots. These spacious mountains, however, contained fruitful pastures and rich meadows for feeding cattle, which compensated for the barrenness of other parts, and made amends for the want of corn. The air, though dense, was healthful and preserved the inhabitants to an extreme old age ; but the people were savage, without religion, vagabonds, and addicted to stealth. They had no settled abode, and moved about as wind and weather inclined them."

" Here the monks, sitting in their cloisters and enjoying the fresh air, when they happened to look up towards the horizon, beheld the tops of the mountains, as it were, touching the heavens, and herds of wild deer feeding on their summits."

A very pleasant picture, that ; but these are the marches and borderlands of Wales. Wales then was not merely an independent Principality, but it was inhabited by men who delighted to come across the border and make forays. Very soon the monks of Llanthony felt the force of this, for in the civil war between the adherents of Henry the First and Stephen, when the Welsh felt themselves safe to do as they pleased in these parts, they came in great numbers and quartered themselves upon the monastery. They came with their wives and children, and simply took possession of it. The women took the refectory, singing profane songs, and scandalised the brethren

by their indecent behaviour. Complaint was made to Robert de Betun, Bishop of Hereford, and he invited them to Hereford, afterwards prevailing upon Milo de Lacey to make the Priory a gift of land at Hyde, near Hempstead, by the city of Gloucester, there to found a new Llanthony. Here, accordingly in 1136, the monks established themselves.

Thus did this original Llanthony in the valley of the Honddu decay. It did not die at once : it declined slowly. The monks were not of like mind with their original founder, and preferred the neighbourhood of a populous city ; and they would not return to these border solitudes when the troubles were past. The new Llanthony, near Gloucester, speedily grew wealthy and the brethren eaten up with luxury, sloth and pride. This decline from high ideals recalls how, when our Richard the First—he of the Lion Heart—was in France, there was one who said to him “ You have three daughters at home: Pride, Luxury and Avarice.”

“ You are wrong, my friend,” replied the King : “ they are no longer at home. I have married Pride to the Templars, Luxury to the Black Canons, and Avarice to the Cistercians.”

The monkish historian of Llanthony goes on to describe what happened. He tells us how the brethren compared the situations of the old Llanthony and the new.

“ Here fertile meadows, there barren heaths ; here the wealthy English : there the beggarly Welsh. They suffered the buildings of their old house to fall into ruin, and, to avoid the scandal of deserting an ancient monastery, they send to it their old and useless members, who can be profitable neither to themselves nor to others, who might say, with the apostle, ‘ We are made the scum and outcast of the brethren.’ They

permitted the monastery to be reduced to such poverty that the friars were without surplices and were compelled to perform the duties of the Church against the custom of the rules of the Order. Sometimes one day's bread must serve for two, whilst they of Gloucester enjoyed superfluities. Our remonstrances excited either their anger or ridicule, but produced no alteration. If these complaints were repeated, they replied : ' Who would go and sing to the wolves ? Do the whelps of wolves delight in loud music ? ' They even made sport, and when any person were sent thither, would ask, ' What fault has he committed ; why is he sent to prison ? ' Thus was the mistress and mother-house called a dungeon and a place of banishment for criminals."

These laments were of no avail : the library was despoiled, its archives were taken away ; its vestments and relics went. Whatever was valuable or ornamental went to Gloucester. Even the bells were carried away, notwithstanding their great weight. Under Edward the Fourth the Gloucester Llanthony was made the principal, but it was under obligation to maintain at the original home a Prior and four Canons.

At the dissolution, in 1539, the old Llanthony was valued at £71 3s. 2d. ; and the Gloucestershire monastery at £648 19s. 11d. Richard Hempstead, the last Prior, was given a pension of £100 a year ; but he carried away many ancient manuscripts, and gave them to his brother-in-law. The property was sold to one Richard Arnold, and from his descendant, Captain Arnold, of Llanvihangel, it was bought by Harley, the statesman of Queen Anne's time, afterwards Earl of Oxford.

In 1806, Llanthony was purchased by none other than Walter Savage Landor, the celebrated writer, and

(1775-1867) author, among many other works, of *Imaginary Conversations*. He was a man of wealth, and could well afford to indulge the fancy.

For the estates of Llanthony and Cwmjoy he laid out, in purchase-money and improvements, £70,000. His improvements were extensive. For several years he employed between twenty and thirty labourers, in building and planting. At his own expense he made a road eight miles long, and planted and fenced half a million of trees, and had a million more, ready for planting.

But Llanthony was not destined to become more agreeable to him than it had been to the monks. According to his own statement, he received such infamous treatment from both his steward and principal farmer tenants during his absence on the Continent, that he determined to abandon the place as a residence. He had built a house at a cost of £8,000, but he pulled it down, stick and stone, that his son might not be exposed to the like vexations by living there. Two farmers, especially, brothers, whose united rents amounted to £1,500 a year, refused all payment, until compelled by law, and then fled to America. From these tenants the steward received £1,000; but Landor stated he never received a farthing of it; and he dismissed the man. He had 12,000 acres of land here at Llanthony, much of it mountain, where he established flocks of sheep and game. He had some twenty watchers on the hills, night and day; but he declared he had never a grouse on his table, although the game cost him more annually than the charges he was at after leaving Llanthony.

But much of that was the Landorian way. The impulsive and eccentric, choleric and quarrelsome Landor went through life exactly like that.

Some not unnatural confusion exists in the minds of those who have not visited Llanthony between these ancient ruins and a modern so-styled "Abbey" of the like name, four miles distant. This, now gone to decay, has nothing of the rich beauty or of the romance of the ancient place; but was a retreat, pretending to be a monastery, established by the eccentric and unbalanced person, Joseph Leycester Lyne, styling himself "Father Ignatius," who attracted a great deal of notoriety in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Lyne was born in 1837, and having been ordained in the Church of England in 1860, began, as one influenced by Pusey, a career as an extremely High Churchman which brought him, early and late, into constant opposition to his superiors. In 1870 he purchased land at Llanthony and founded there a kind of monastic establishment within the Church of England which alarmed and scandalised even the most extreme. He had in 1862 adopted the Benedictine habit and begun to call himself "Father Ignatius." Whether he was merely an eccentric and undisciplined fanatic or consciously a poseur and a mountebank seems never to have been quite decided. In 1873 he was defendant in an action brought against him for detaining at Llanthony a young man named Todd, a novice in his monastery, but a ward in Chancery. Lyne's own father disavowed him in 1877. He died in 1908 at Camberley, and was buried at Llanthony, which his community abandoned in 1911 for Caldey Island, off the coast of Tenby, South Wales. They presently, and inevitably 'verted to Rome.

STRATA FLORIDA ABBEY

IN the valley of the Ystwyth, some fifteen miles to the south-east of Aberystwyth, stand the scanty ruins of what was once the most important Abbey in Wales—the Cistercian Abbey of Strata Florida, or, as the Welsh styled it, “Ystrad Fflur.”

The name means the “Valley of Flowers,” and a pleasant, flowery vale it is yet. The Cistercians loved to give picturesque and poetic names to their Abbeys. To us of to-day it seems an amiable and appreciative trait in those White Monks, but it did not appear to be so to Walter Mapes, the mediæval poet and satirist, who in his writings satirises this custom of the Cistercians. Mapes, however, detested monks, and especially did he detest this Order; and so it is not to be expected that anything they might do would commend itself to him.

Certainly the names of their Abbeys often are beautifully appreciative :

“Valle Crucis” is an example. Mapes refers to others; those of Merevale in Warwickshire, which the monks called “Mira Vallis”; and “Casa Dei,” “Vallis Dei,” “Portus Salutis,” and others.

There is a railway station for Strata Florida, but it is three miles away, and was, in fact, so named by the railway authorities in sheer desperation. The nearest villages to the station are Yspytty Ystradmeurig and Penrhydfendigaid, and it rightly was thought that to choose the name of either of these fearful specimens of the Welsh way of naming places otherwise inoffensive

would be to court disaster ; so the choice fell upon the place farthest away.

The Abbey is said to have been founded about 1184, but the date and the founder are alike uncertain. The history of this religious house is a stormy one. Edward the First laid it in ruins, and the rebuilt Abbey was in



ALL THAT IS LEFT OF STRATA FLORIDA ABBEY

turn destroyed by the English in the time of Henry the Fourth, during the long-drawn-out war between his troops and the Welsh in the rising of Owain Glyndwr. The English soldiers stabled their horses in the choir, while a guard kept watch over the one thousand Welsh children taken away from their parents before being deported into England.

This was one of the measures undertaken to under-

mine the resistance of the Welsh ; but Glyndwr's rebellion lasted fifteen years, ending in 1416. We need not exclaim over harshly against the English soldiers' stabling their horses in the Abbey Church, for Glyndwr conducted himself towards the churches of his own Wales in no better fashion. The best we can say is that they were both equally sacrilegious.

Strata Florida Abbey was again rebuilt, after these doings, finally to be brought to irremediable ruin in the general havoc wrought in the time of Henry the Eighth. Almost the only relic of it of any architectural note is the west doorway of the Abbey church, a stone archway of the Norman period, with six receding ribs, curiously banded. It is unique, as a design.

Strata Florida was magnificent. The Welsh princes had lavished money upon it without stint, but its site is now one that shows little beyond this archway and a maze of not very intelligible foundations. Behind the site of the south transept was the monks' cemetery. There you may see a flat stone slab inscribed with the name of Cadell, brother of one of the founders of the Abbey, Lord Rhys.

Between the Abbey and the river is that other burying place where lie in places, not now marked, the many Welsh princes who sought sepulture in this "Westminster Abbey of Wales," as it has been styled. "In it be XXIX great hue trees," wrote the antiquary, Leland, of Henry the Eighth's time. By "hue trees" he meant yews. Originally there were forty.

Beneath one was laid that greatest of the Welsh poets, Dafydd ap Gwilym. His greatest rival in life, but fervid admirer in death, Gruffydd Gryg, wrote of that tree :

"May lightnings never lay thee low,
Nor archer cut from thee his bow."

But there remain now but two of those once forty trees, and none may say if Gruffydd is or is not at rest beneath one of those surviving twain.

The keen rivalry of those two bards was long and bitter ; but we are told how it was artfully allayed and changed into friendship by a clever ruse. A friend of both, risking much, told each separately that the other was dead, and was to be buried at Strata Florida on a certain day. To both he purposely mentioned the same day.

The result was that each poet, fired by a generous admiration of the other—an admiration he could afford to indulge now his rival was presumably out of the way—composed an extremely touching eulogy of his rival. Each repaired to the churchyard, to read it beside the grave ; but to the astonishment of one another, they met, and the eulogies, to any ordinary way of thinking, would have proved out of place. But these were poets, and—even more than that—Welsh poets ; and they determined each one to read his own touching composition.

The result was that the admiration thus expressed for each other so overcame their long enmity that they became fast friends.

VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY

AMONG the very numerous houses of the Cistercians, whose great number proves how vastly the mediæval mind was impressed by the holiness and practical piety exhibited by the White Monks in the earlier years of their Order, Valle Crucis Abbey is perhaps the least known. Its ruins are situated, if not in a remote spot, at least in a region which is missed by the majority of tourists in North Wales. The Abbey of Valle Crucis, founded about 1200 by Madoc ap Gruffydd Maelor in Pant-y-Groes (which is the native Welsh for "Valley of the Cross"), is in the neighbourhood of Llangollen. Tourists pass through the Vale of Llangollen, along the Holyhead Road, and generally they do not turn aside.

The "Valley of the Cross" is, however, scarce two miles to the north-west of Llangollen town, on the way to Ruthin. To come to the ruins is rather a pleasant walk than a trip by wheels. The Abbey stands, secluded, in a meadow, with lofty hills around it. It was not their religious house, as might be thought, which gave a name to this valley, but a monument, already ancient when the Abbey was built: the hoary stone called "Eliseg's Pillar," still to be seen in a field hard by.

This pillar, which, however, almost certainly was never actually a cross, is well over a thousand years old. It once was taller than now, but it was thrown down during the Civil War by Puritan soldiers, who took it to be a religious relic, instead of what it really is:

the monument erected by Concenn ap Cadell in memory of his great-grandfather, Eliseg.

"This is that Eliseg," said the inscription, "who recovered his inheritance of Powis by the sword from the power of the Angles." Thus we see that this Prince of Powis warred successfully with the invading Saxon. Not for long, however, did the region of Powis or these borderlands remain in the hands of their native Welsh, for the Normans soon overran the country.

The pillar that once bore this inscription is now so worn that the lettering has become indecipherable. "Eliseg's Pillar" is said to be the oldest monument in Wales. Antiquaries consider the stone, which stands now only some eight feet high, instead of its original twelve, to have been part of a Roman column, brought from Chester (the Roman "Deva"), or from "Uri-conuim," a Roman town, by Wroxeter.

It is considered by some that this Cistercian house came into being on the site of an earlier Benedictine monastery, and that the White Monks or the Black came to blows for its possession; but the whole matter is obscure. The ruins consist of the roofless Abbey church and the eastern range of the cloisters, with the well-preserved chapter-house. The monks' dormitory, too, once in use as a farmhouse has fortunately survived.

The architecture is chiefly in the Early English style of the thirteenth century with some fourteenth century windows and later additions. Numerous fragments of ancient monuments remain. One of them possibly may be that of the beautiful Myfanwy, the "princess, fairer than the cherry's bloom," sung by the Welsh poet. Somewhere here, too, lies the poet himself, Iolo Goch, but no stone marks his resting-place. This seems unfair, for Iolo wrote with true Welsh fervour of that redoubtable hero Owain Glyndwr

—called by the English “Owen Glendower”—who for so long maintained a stubborn uprising in the time of Henry the Fourth and was a national hero, “the great, the good,” as Iolo styles him. Another Welsh bard, writing enthusiastically of the hospitality dispensed by the monks of Valle Crucis, tells us that the Abbots of his time lived royally, scorning the frugal diet of an earlier age. Four courses of meat were the usual complement at table, served in silver dishes ; and the viands were washed down with claret. Nothing of the early Cistercian austerity in this way of living, nor anything of the original simplicity about the Abbot, who had three of his fingers covered with rings. At the dissolution in 1539 the annual value of Valle Crucis Abbey was £188, reckoning the much greater values of that time, about £3700 of our present currency.

The enthusiastic poet’s account of the generous living here lends point to what Dr. Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford, has written about monastic life. “From the end of the twelfth century,” he says, “until the Reformation, the monasteries remained magnificent hostleries ; their churches were splendid chapels for noble patrons ; their inhabitants were bachelor country gentlemen, more polished and charitable, but little more learned or pure in life than their lay neighbours ; their estates were well managed. But with a few noble exceptions, there was nothing in the system that did spiritual service. Books were multiplied, but learning declined, and prayers were offered unceasingly, but the efficacious energy of real devotion was not found in the homes that it had reared.”

Yet, to-day, looking upon these venerable ruins, we cannot but deplore the wanton destruction that fell upon them and their like.

FURNESS ABBEY

IN that detached remote northernly part of Lancashire called Furness there stand the red sandstone ruins of yet another among the numerous great Cistercian Abbeys—that of Our Lady of Furness.

The name of this region is a shortened variant of “Furdenesia,” the “further ness,” or promontory, looking upon the hills of Cumberland and Westmorland.

When the Cistercian monks first settled here, in 1127, on the invitation of Stephen, Earl of Boulogne (who became afterwards our King Stephen) to whom the lordship of Furness had been given, this was a wild and secluded vale. To-day, with the discovery of large deposits of iron ore in this neighbourhood, industrial developments have altogether abolished that air of remoteness, and large towns and dockyards take the place of solitudes.

Coming through the town of Dalton-in-Furness, we descend into what was of old known as the “Valley of Deadly Nightshade.” This ominous name is no presage of disaster or horror; it was the name given it from the exceptionally luxuriant growth here of the weed known popularly by that title. To the Saxons it was known as the “bekan,” hence the old alternative name of “Bekansgill” for this valley. The “deadly nightshade” (*atropa belladonna*,) still grows plentifully here.

Time has brought about a strange and ironic development here. Where the old monks came for seclusion from the world there is now a railway, and “Furness

Abbey " station stands partly within the precincts of their monastery.

Furness was a red sandstone abbey, as we see from the abundant ruins of it, in the now well-kept grounds, with lawns and gardens. The nave's great cylindrical columns clearly show the Abbey church to have been of the Norman period ; while the choir and transepts displaying Early English, Decorated and Perpendicular work, disclose the intentions of the abbots gradually to rebuild.

The chapter-house, although in common with the ruins in general, roofless, retains much of the delicate



FURNESS ABBEY

sculptured enrichment for which it is famed, including a decorative treatment of the flowers, berries, and foliage of the " deadly nightshade " plant that gives its name to this vale.

The charter of Stephen conferred upon Furness Abbey immense estates, endowing it with a power almost regal. In that and succeeding charters the brethren are described as possessing the right of fishery in Lancaster, Staplethorne, Furness Forest, the Isle of Walney, the chase of Walney, and of numerous other places.

The stewardship of the Abbey was itself of such

importance that it usually was held by some personage of station ; so much so that early in the reign of Henry the Eighth, Stanley, Earl of Derby, was not too proud to be a candidate for that office, which was solicited for him by Cardinal Wolsey.

There were thirty-eight abbots of Furness, the first being Evan de Abrincis : the last, who surrendered the abbey, in 1537, was Roger Pyle. The income was then £805 16s. 5d. per annum, a sum which the comparative history of prices shows us to have been equivalent to some £20,000 of our own money to-day.

That was a sad and threatening day when the last Abbot was summoned to appear at Whalley Abbey, before the Earl of Sussex, sitting there on behalf of the King. It was thought possible that my Lord Abbot of Furness might choose to resist, as already had done the Abbot of Whalley, even to a resort to rebellion in arms, in the Pilgrimage of Grace. When the Abbot of Furness arrived at the gate of Whalley Abbey, he saw hanging there the bodies of this abbot and two of his monks. With that grim evidence impressed upon him of what would happen to those who would resist, he signed the deed that conveyed Furness Abbey and all its belonging to the King, in augmentation and increase of the honour of his Royal Majesty. On June 23rd, 1537, came Southwell, one of the King's visitors, to finish the business, giving to each one of the thirty monks " forty shillings, as the King's whole reward." They were not given, as commonly was done, pensions.

The work of demolishing the buildings was at once begun. The liberty and lordship of the Abbey properties remained with the Crown, until the time of Charles the Second, who, in 1662, granted them to General Monk, whom he had created Duke of Albe-

marle, for his services in bringing about the restoration of the monarchy. Monk's granddaughter brought them by marriage into the Scott family, Dukes of Buccleuch.

With the revenue from their large estates the monks used to maintain a lavish hospitality. The abbey tenants resorted to the monastery on "tunning days" sometimes with thirty horses, and had delivered to each one of them a barrel of ale, each containing ten or twelve gallons; and to everyone who had a barrel of ale were given a dozen loaves of bread. These were weekly gifts.

The children and servants of the tenants commonly came from the plough or other work to the monastery where they had dinner or supper. And those tenants and others who desired charity received it weekly. The children were taught, and were instructed in singing.

All these facts were adduced in evidence in the course of an action at law by the tenants of the Crown in the seventeenth century, who sought to establish various ancient rights. For the Crown it was pleaded that all these gifts were in the nature of charities, and evidence of optional good-will; but the tenants won, on the ruling that these gifts were for the most part a condition of tenancy.

Where the old Lords, Abbots of Furness had their stately "lodging" in the Abbot's House, and where they received distinguished personages as their guests, the Furness Abbey hotel stands to-day.

Could those ancient ecclesiastics return, they would find in that Gothic building something that would partly reconcile them; for in the so-called "Abbot's Room" they would renew acquaintance with some old and curious sculptures formerly in their abbey.

Thus wrote John Still, the poetical historian of the Abbey, in the reign of Henry the Sixth :—

“ Hæc vallis tenuit olim sibi nomen ad herba
 Bekan, qua viruit, dulcis nunc, tunc sed acerba;
 Inde domus nomen, Beckansgill claruit ante.”

Here is the surrender to the King of Furness Abbey by the last Abbot, in the form and words of the document in which he made it :—“ M^d at Whalley abbey, the Thursday beyng the vth day off Aprill, in the xxviiith yere of our soverand lord kyng Henrie viijth that I, Roger abbot of the monasterie of Furnes, knowyng the mysorder and evyll liff both unto God and our prynce of the bredren of the said monasterie, in dischargyng of my conscience doo frely and hollie surrender, giff, and grant unto the kynges highnes, and to his heyres and assignes for evermore, all suche interest and titill as I had, have, or may have, of and in the said monasterie of Furnes, and of and in the landes, renttes, possessions, revenous, servyces, both spirituall and temporall, and of and in all goodes and cattalles and all other thyng whatsoever it be, belongyng, or in any vise apperteynging to the said monasterie and every part and parcell therof, in as large and ample maner and forme as ever I hade or aught to have of and in the titill, interest, gift graunt, or otherwise, permittyng and byndeyng my selff by thes presentes that from hensforth I shall at all tymes and in all places, whansoever I shalbe called uppon, be redye and glad to conferme, ratifie, and astabilishe this my deyed, purpos, mynd and intent, as shalbe devised by the lerned counsell of the Kynges said highnes, wiche commyth frely of my selff and without ony inforcement, in consideracion of the evyll dissposicion of the bredren

of the said monasterie, as is aforesaid : in wittynes wherof herunto I have subscribed my name and writtyn this byll with myn awn (hand) the day, yere, and place beforesaid, in the presence of the right honorable lord my lord therle of Sussex, the kynges levetenaunt within this countie of Lancaster, and also in the presence of sir Thomas Butteler, Sir William Leyland, Mr Johan Cladon, clerk, sir Johan Beron, sir Antony Fitzherbert, one of the kynges justisis, beyng of the kynges counsell within the said countie, who hereunto have also put to theyr handes to testifie the same.

Per me, Rogerum abbatem Furnesii

Robertus Sussex

Antony Fitzherbert

Wylliam Leyland

Henry Farrynjenk

Johon Clayden, prest.

So did Roger Pyle, by force majeure, thus make over the great princely Abbey of Furness and write things of his monastery which he well knew to be untrue.

WHALLEY ABBEY

IN Lancashire, between Blackburn and Clitheroe, once stood the Cistercian Abbey of Whalley, whose ruins are yet to be seen, hard by Whalley church. Whalley Abbey was second in importance in this County Palatine of Lancashire only to the great Abbey of Furness. The story of Whalley Abbey is at once entertaining and, in its last chapter, grim. It begins with the founding of a Cistercian Abbey by John, Constable of Chester, in 1163, at Stanlawe, in Cheshire. In their picturesque way, the Cistercians called it "Locus Benedictus"; but in fact the location of Stanlawe Abbey was anything rather than blest, for not only was the place barren and unfruitful, but it was also subject, particularly on the occasions of spring tides, to encroachments of the sea; and the buildings sometimes were three feet deep in water. Therefore when in 1287 part of the Abbey fell, and further, when two years later it was almost wholly consumed by fire, even the monks themselves began to think they had been wrong in styling the place "blest." Accordingly, when another benefactor appeared in 1296, in the person of Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, offering to transfer them to Whalley; they were pleased indeed. So to Whalley, "the field of wells," they were translated, with an augmentation of their number from forty to sixty.

The site of Stanlawe Abbey was on the Cheshire coast, between Ince and what is now Ellesmere Port. The Abbey was built on an isolated rock at the Mersey

and the river Gowy. All around stretched a bare and desolate marsh. Some scanty traces of the former Abbey may yet be traced. The monks, on their removal to Whalley, unhappily did not, for some reason, commend themselves to the people of this vale, which otherwise was pleasant, being warm and sheltered ; and there was a lack of wood and timber. Moreover, the monks of Sawley Abbey, only eight miles away, objected to their coming here at all, so near their pitch, so to speak. Therefore, at one time they actually contemplated another move, to Toxteth, near Liverpool, but this idea was abandoned.

In 1239 the Abbey church was dedicated. It and the domestic buildings cost £3,000, in times when an artisan's wage was two pence a day : so we may form some idea of the size and elaboration of Whalley Abbey. It owned many widespreading manors, exercised an abounding hospitality, and possessed an ample income to provide for the well-being of its tenants, and for the education of their children. There were ninety servants of the Abbey, twenty of whom were the personal servants of the Lord Abbot. This great house was dissolved in 1539 ; after the execution of the last Abbot two years earlier, for his part in that religious rising in the North, the " Pilgrimage of Grace." John Paslew had been elected Abbot in 1507. Conflicting accounts have come down to us about his participation in the rebellion, by which, according to some of the depositions taken after the wholesale arrests which followed its suppression, he is said to have been forced into it by an assemblage of four hundred rebels, coming to the Abbey, October 3rd, 1536, and headed by one Nicholas Tempest, swearing him and his monks to the cause of that violent uprising against the King and his government,

in the policy of disestablishing the religious houses. However, that may be, he threw in his lot with them, and, calling himself the "Earl of Poverty," marched, together with his brethren and the Abbot of Sawley, beneath the banner bearing as a device the Five Wounds of Christ, to compel the King and his advisers into other courses.

After the failure of the Pilgrimage of Grace he was arrested and remitted to Lancaster Assizes, and tried



WHALLEY ABBEY

on a charge of high treason. Being duly convicted, he was sent to Whalley and hanged there, in front of one of the gatehouses of his own Abbey, March 10th, 1537. Two days later, two of the monks, John Eastgate and William Haydocke, also suffered. Richard Eastgate, brother of John, and Richard Trafford the Abbot of Sawley, with his Prior, were hanged at Lancaster. It was a merciless repression. Three other Abbots of the North were hanged: those of Fountains, Jervaulx, and Barlings, and the Prior of Bridlington, with many monks; and numbers of the

noblemen and gentlemen of those parts : together with the many common people who had taken part in the rebellion.

The annual value of Whalley Abbey, at its suppression in 1539 was £321 9s. 1½d. The buildings and land were sold in 1553 to John Braddyl and Richard Assheton.

The ruins stand in private grounds, beside the river Calder, and are not readily accessible.

CASTLE ACRE PRIORY

IN a lonely part of Norfolk is the grimly silent village of Castle Acre, situated upon a rise above the little river Nar. The village, built almost wholly from the ruins of a huge Norman castle and priory which owed their origin to William de Warenne, one of those who fought under William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings, is little visited.

De Warenne took his name from the river Varenne in Normandy. Some fragments of his castle remain at Bellencombte. He was one of the greatest of Norman barons, and built not only the castle and priory of Castle Acre, but those also of the better-known castle and priory at Lewes, in far-away Sussex.

This great noble, later created Earl of Surrey, was long thought to have owed his large grants of land to his having married Gundrada, daughter or step-daughter of the Conqueror, but modern historians are inclined to believe that Gundrada was no sort of relation to him.

It might well be even that they would go the length of disbelieving in the existence of the lady at all, but for the circumstance that the leaden coffins of herself and her husband were, with their names plainly to be read upon them, discovered in 1845, when the remains of the priory of St. Pancras at Lewes were being cleared away for the construction of the London and Brighton Railway's branch line through that town.

Such was the unromantic ending of the last relics of Lewes Priory, which was the first of Cluniac monks

in England, the Priory of Castle Acre being the second. The reasons for de Warenne's especial benevolence towards this religious order are found in the story of the pilgrimage made by himself and his wife to Rome.

They were so hospitably entertained by the monks at Clugny, that the great and powerful lord, turning his gaze from warlike deeds to the welfare of his soul, and deciding to found monasteries (as did also many another of his kind) bethought him of those monks



CASTLE ACRE PRIORY

who had been so good to himself and his wife on pilgrimage.

Gundrada died at Castle Acre very soon after the foundation-stone of the priory there had been laid ; but in spite of the difficulties of transport in those times, her body was conveyed to Lewes Priory ; and there, three years later, her husband was laid beside her.

Castle Acre is a strange and weird place, owing its origin to a Roman station on that mysterious road, the Peddar's Way, prehistoric in its origin but adapted by the Romans. It is now, for its greater length, a

disused grassy lane, running all the way from Holme-next-the-Sea on the Norfolk coast, past Castle Acre, and so by Thetford, into Suffolk.

The ruins of De Warenne's great castle, covering eighteen acres, are to-day merely shapeless heaps of stone, but the remains of his priory (generally in the locality known as "the Abbey") form a highly picturesque group, chiefly of the late Norman west front of the Priory Church, an imposing work with a fine series of interlacing arches, and some fragments of the cloisters and transepts. But all else of the once grand Priory Church has disappeared.

The establishment of Castle Acre Priory numbered thirty-six monks. By 1283, this religious house owned 490 acres and five watermills, and numbered amongst its benefactors the most prominent families in East Anglia. The De Warennes lasted longer than most of the Norman families, but by 1347 they had become extinct. In 1538 the priory was dissolved, and its lands were granted to Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, who already owned the castle.

Everywhere in the village the stranger sees fragments of sculptured stone from the priory and grotesque gargoyles, built into cottage walls. The ruins are now among the properties of the Earl of Leicester, who has placed them at the disposition of His Majesty's Office of Works, which will proceed to repair them, to prevent further decay.

KIRKHAM ABBEY GATEWAY

ALTHOUGH little remains of the Austin Abbey or Priory, of Kirkham, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, near Castle Howard, its beautiful gatehouse approach is well worth a long journey to see. Kirkham was founded by Walter l'Espece, Lord of Helmsley, in 1122 ; who founded also Rievaulx Abbey, 1131, and



THE GATEHOUSE KIRKHAM ABBEY

Warden Abbey, in Bedfordshire, 1136. It lasted until the Dissolution, in 1535, when its annual income was estimated at £269 5s. 9d. The last Prior, John Kyldwyche, with the seventeen brethren, surrendered it December 8th, 1539. The beautiful gatehouse, in the lane leading to Westow, is chiefly of fourteenth century date. It is decorated in all with ten heraldic shields.

BUTLEY PRIORY

A CURIOUS, but not inappropriate later history has befallen the remains of Butley Priory, a monastery founded in 1171 by Ranulph Glanville, who was also the founder of Leiston Abbey, in the same region of Suffolk. The remains of Butley Priory stand in the little-visited district of Orford. On the dissolution,



BUTLEY

Priory church and lands were granted to the Duke of Norfolk, who four years later sold the property. Of late years the owner was Lord Rendlesham.

Practically nothing is left of the Priory church, and the chief relic is the Gatehouse, once a noble building and still impressive and beautiful. It was in 1727 converted into a residence, and later became—as it is now—the vicarage. It is a building of flint and stone, of fourteenth-century date, and is a fine upstanding

mass, with striking skyline. Very prominently on its front elevation are rows of stone shields, thirty-five in number, bearing the sculptured heraldic cognizances of France 'ancient,' Germany, Castile, and St. Edmund; together with those of a number of benefactors to the Priory. Between each shield is a small square stone charged with a fleur-de-lys. The lower rooms of the gatehouse are vaulted in stone. The appearance of this beautiful survival in the quiet landscape is extraordinarily romantic in its singularity, with its towers gone and the distinctly secular and domestic eighteenth-century roofing and chimneys taking their place. The stonework is particularly good, and the flush knapped-flint work is as fine as anything to be found in East Anglia.

MELROSE ABBEY

MELROSE ABBEY, "the fairest flower of Gothic architecture in Scotland," as aptly it has been styled, was founded in 1136 by David the First, that Scottish



THE ENTRANCE, BUTLEY

king who was so busy in founding abbeys: those of Dryburgh, Jedburgh, and Kelso being his pious work. He founded Melrose for a colony of Cistercian monks, whom—being impressed by their piety—he invited

from the Abbey of Rievaulx, in Yorkshire, to fill this, the first of all the Cistercian monasteries in Scotland.

When that ecclesiastically-minded monarch, King David, established this Abbey of Melrose, the valley of the Tweed, in which it arose, was a beautiful and sequestered vale ; a fitting spot for so lovely a building. This is not to say that the Melrose Abbey we see to-day is that of David's time. It was wholly rebuilt, and on a grander scale, in a later age ; and is now, in fact,



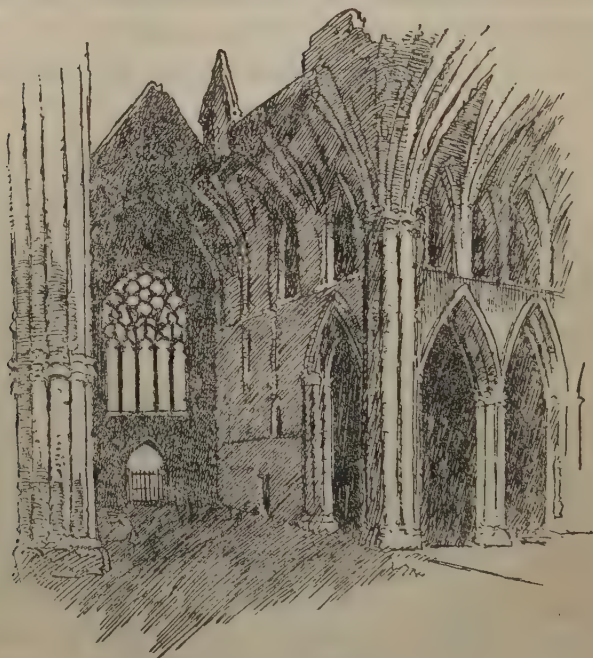
THE GATEHOUSE, BUTLEY

a building in what architects and antiquaries call the “ Late Decorated ” period.

That period places the building about the year 1326-1370. It was an age when Gothic ecclesiastical, as well as secular architecture in Scotland, was strongly influenced by the close association which Scotland had then with France. Hence the very marked “ Flamboyant ” style to be noticed in the decoration : that style being more noticeable in France than else-

where. It took its name from the very free, flowing tracery of windows, a curving and involved manner of design and execution which was likened fancifully to flames.

The ruins consist of the choir, transepts, portions of the nave, and a part of the central tower. The



MELROSE ABBEY

most beautiful of the Flamboyant traceried windows is that of the south transept. The total length of the abbey is 258 feet.

It is to Robert Bruce, the Scottish monarch of lasting romance, that Melrose Abbey owes much of its loveliest rebuilding, for in 1326 he made a grant of money equivalent to some £75,000 of our currency towards the work. The ruins are now the property of the Duke of Buccleuch.

The heart of Bruce, the victor of Bannockburn, was laid before the Abbey's high altar, in that casket which Douglas had flung before him into the Saracen host in Palestine, with the shout, as the poet tells us as he rushed into the hopeless mêlée, there to perish :

“ Forward, brave heart, as thou wert wont
Douglas will follow thee, or die ! ”

In spite of the ruinous state of the old buildings, the great beauties of its traceried windows, no two of which are alike, and the delicate sculptured work of the capitals of its columns and other details remain very clear and sharp. Beneath the exterior of one of these beautiful windows is the tomb of that “ Christian philosopher,” Sir David Brewster, a man of science whose especial study was optics. The touching inscription upon it, “ The Lord is my Light,” was chosen by himself. His last words were : “ I shall see Jesus, Who created all things ; Jesus, Who made the worlds ; I shall see Him as He is, and that will be grand.”

To Sir Walter Scott, whose home at Abbotsford is not far away, Melrose was as intimately known as any place in Scotland ; but that did not serve to prevent him making a mistake in an architectural term, when writing in his *Lay of the Last Minstrel* on the Abbey. He wrote of “ oriels.” There are not any oriel windows in the Abbey church. It is an example of that romantic enthusiasm without exact information which marked very deeply the Gothic trend of his imagination, and among other errors, led him in *Ivanhoe*, to clothe his Norman knights in plate-armour in a period long before it came into use, and when chain-mail was the only wear.

Sir Walter rightly thought moonlight was the best condition under which to see the Abbey :

“ If thou would'st see fair Melrose aright.
Go visit it by the pale moonlight :
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild but to flout the ruins grey.
When the broken arches are black in night
And each shafted oriel glimmers white :
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruin'd central tower :
When buttress and buttress alternately,
Seem fram'd in ebon and ivory ;
When silver edges the imagery
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die
And the owls that hoot o'er the dead man's grave—
Then go ! ”

What was the solitary vale of King David's time is in our day greatly qualified by industrial developments. Four miles away, along the Tweed, the factory chimneys of Galashiels are evidences of a very different kind of workaday world from that of eight hundred years ago ; and although the little burgh of Melrose has itself no manufacturies, yet it is not the humble dependent at the abbey doors that once it was ; and modern villas, encroaching even upon the precincts of the Abbey itself, serve to show how far away from ancient ideals are the people of to-day.

The domestic portions of the Abbey are found, not where they were built, but forming much of Melrose town, and built into farmhouses, far and near. There can be very few old houses in this neighbourhood that have not been erected, to greater or smaller extent, from the stones of the monastery ; while a good many



MELROSE ABBEY : EAST WINDOW

ornately-sculptured stones from the Abbey church itself meet the eye oddly and unexpectedly from old walls and humble cottages.

This is the heart of what is known as the " Scott Country " ; and Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott, is but three miles away.

The English armies in 1322, 1385, and 1545 wrought much havoc here. It was they who made a roofless ruin of the Abbey church ; but, as we have already seen, the ultimate artists in destruction were the frugal-minded locals themselves, who looked upon the Abbey as a handy quarry for building materials.

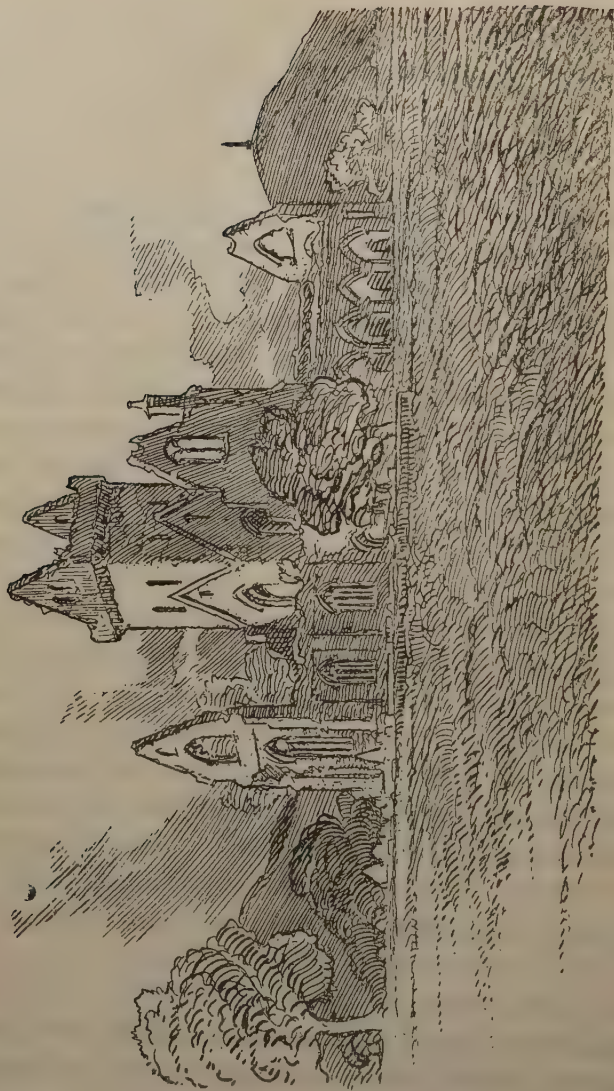
SWEETHEART ABBEY

OR THE ABBEY OF DULCE COR

NONE among our ancient abbeys has a name so full of romance as that of Sweetheart Abbey, near Dumfries. Nor is that name just a popular title given by romantically-inclined writers or visitors. It is the exact name and style of a religious house founded for Cistercian monks by Devorguilla, wife of John Balliol, a great English noble, who held the lordship of Barnard Castle, in Yorkshire, lands in Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire, and great manors in Normandy. He and his wife were founders of Balliol College, Oxford.

Devorguilla, his wife, daughter of Alan of Galloway, brought all these Scottish lands in Nithsdale to him. Her foundation of Sweetheart Abbey, in 1275, was partly in memory of her husband, who died in 1269. She survived until 1290, and willed that her husband's heart, which she had caused to be embalmed and kept in a silver casket, should be buried with her in her Abbey church. During her long widowhood of twenty-one years, as we are told, she carried the silver casket everywhere with her.

Devorguilla's wish was observed, and her husband's heart was duly buried with her in the Abbey of Dulce Cor, as the Latinity always affected by the old monks phrased it, literally "Sweetheart Abbey." Armorial shields sculptured on various parts of the building prominently display the arms of Devorguilla's mon-



SWEETHEART ABBEY

astery—two pastoral staves in saltire with a heart above them.

No man knows exactly where her tomb was situated in the abbey, and although, about 1870, a sum of money—some £500—was expended by the local gentry in effecting repairs to the ruins, so they should not collapse, neither Devorguilla's resting-place nor the silver casket was to be found, when the occasion was used to make a search for them.

The third surviving son of John Balliol and Devorguilla became a highly important and historical personage. He was, in 1292, a candidate for the Crown of Scotland, vacant by the death of Margaret, the "Maid of Norway," who had succeeded Alexander the Third. Margaret had died in 1290, and for lack of direct heir to the Scottish throne the affairs of Scotland were in confusion. The two candidates were Robert Bruce and John Balliol. Each claimed descent from the Scottish king, William the Lion, who had died in 1214. Balliol's claim was through kinship, through his mother, with Margaret, the "Maid of Norway."

Destruction's hand has wrecked the Abbey of Dulce Cor, and the domestic buildings of the monastery have wholly disappeared, but the great abbey church, although roofless, is still a noble building and many of its details are in a good state of preservation. The style is what architects and antiquaries describe as 'Early English,' but there are some later additions of the Decorated period.

Generally speaking, the Cistercian monks did not build towers to their abbeys, but here we have an exception in the central tower of Sweetheart Abbey, with its saddleback roof. A curious inscription cut on one of the walls—"Chus tim of nid" ("Choose

time of need")—appears to be in the nature of a punning motto adapted by the brethren of the abbey in reference to its situation in Nithsdale.

Devorguilla's tomb in her pious foundation has been destroyed, and the silver casket containing the heart has disappeared ; so that the poet's couplet :

“ In Dulcecorde Abbey she taketh her rest,
With the heart of her husband embalmed on
her breast,”

has been falsified by pillage.

Sweetheart Abbey is to be found on the Dumfries and Dalbeattie road, a little over seven miles from Dumfries town—that ancient burgh in which the ploughman poet, Robert Burns, died a century ago. It is now an extremely busy and strenuous industrial town, very different in character from what it was in his time.

Yet, although the abbey is within so easy a distance from this scene of engineering activities, the vale in which it is situated is completely pastoral, quiet and secluded.

The road to the abbey is through an imposing avenue of stately lime-trees, and the beautiful scene is overlooked by the great height of Criffel, the most southerly of the Scottish mountains, rising to 1,866 feet. Adjoining the ruins is the village of New Abbey, which takes its name from an alternative name for Sweetheart Abbey.

Here are the parish church, built in 1877, and a modern Roman Catholic chapel. Cresting a neighbouring wooded height is an obelisk, prominent for long distances against the skyline. It is a memorial of the Battle of Waterloo, and was erected in 1817.

The actual domestic records of Sweetheart Abbey are disappointingly few. The last Abbot, Gilbert Brown, resided for a considerable time in the neighbourhood, until the bitter feelings of the reformers, growing ever more intense, drove him away.

He retired to Paris, and lived until his death in the Scottish College there. Many of his books and papers had already been seized by the sheriff. The books were burned, and the papers were given to a local family. They have been altogether lost sight of. Other documents he took with him; probably the abbey chartulary and papers telling in detail the story of the monastery.

Whatever they were, they no longer exist, all having been destroyed in the sacking of the Scottish College during the troubles of the French Revolution.

IONA

IONA, or, to give the isle its olden name, I Columcille, is situated off that lengthy peninsula, the Mull of Cantire, in the south-west of Scotland. The island is three miles in length, and in its greatest breadth, one and a half miles. The sea-strait by which it is reached from the mainland is only one mile in breadth ; but perhaps ninety-nine of every hundred visitors who every summer come to Iona visit it by those excursion steamers which make a ten hours' voyage from Glasgow, or else the shorter trip from Oban.

This holy isle of St. Columba is a barren, treeless spot, supporting a population of about 1,000, with a village and two hotels, and two or three places of worship, including one belonging to the Church of England.

It is in the diocese of Argyll and the Isles (and not, as often thought, that of Sodor and Man, that weirdly-named see, the first part of whose title is a shortened version of "Sodorenses," the "Southern Isles"). The people who first gave this name to the many islands which we call the Western Isles—the Hebrides and the numerous others off the western coasts of Scotland—were the Norsemen, to whom any islands south of the Orkneys and Shetlands naturally would be "southern."

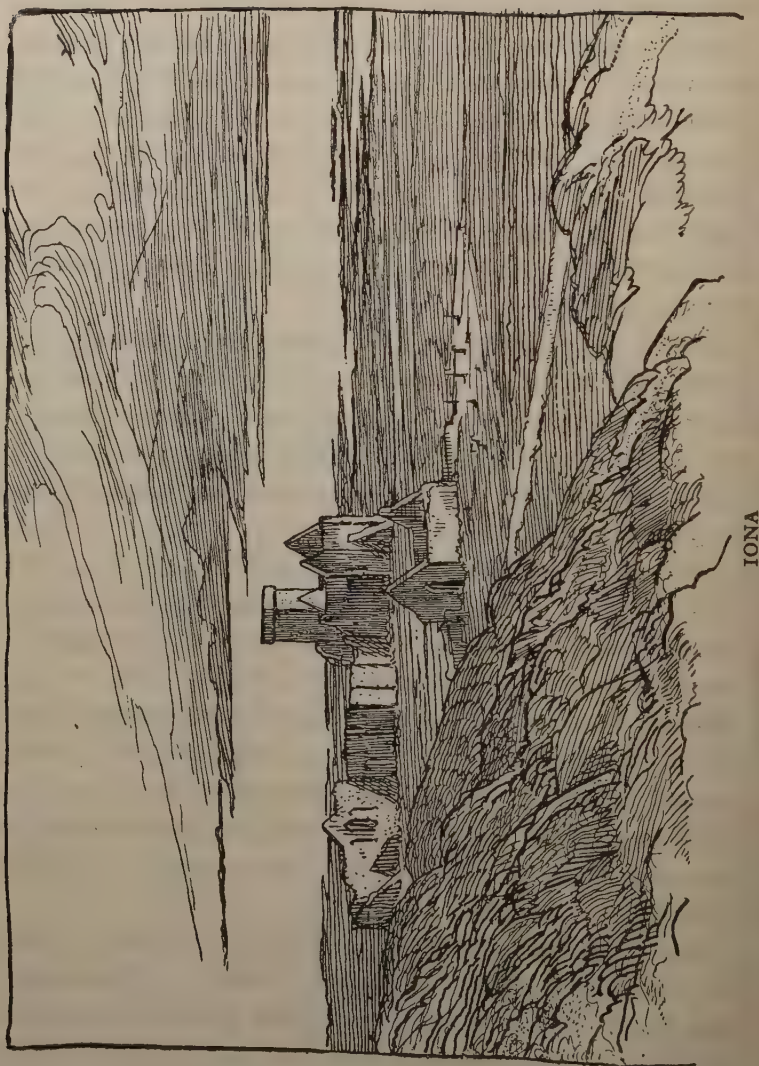
The owner of Iona is the Duke of Argyll, one of whose many titles is "Lord of the Isles": a title seized upon by Sir Walter Scott for one of his lengthy poems.

The sanctity of Iona (I Columcille, the Isle of the Cell of St. Columb) proceeds from the landing here in A.D. 563, of Columba, who was born in A.D. 521, descended, it is thought, from one of those numerous kings of Ireland who were perhaps rather chieftains than monarchs in the larger sense. Columba had been dedicated from his earliest years to religion in that Isle of the Saints, as Ireland then was called, and was learned as well as pious: for Ireland in those days was a centre of religious education, and sent out Christian missionaries to other parts, notably into Cornwall.

Columba, with twelve followers, voyaged from Ireland and chose this unpromising isle for the very reason of its being so barren that it was unlikely to be visited by those fierce Norse sea-raiders who at times descended upon the coasts and ravaged and murdered.

Columba is thought to have converted the population of "I," as the island seems then simply to have been called, from the heathen worship followed by the Druids. The very name "clachan," for a village here, and in Scotland in general, meaning, etymologically "stones," is held to be a proof of this; for it meant in those remote times when there were no stone buildings, but only huts of turf and timber, the standing stones which usually formed the places of Druidic worship.

St. Columba landed at a point at the southern end of the island still known as "Port a' Churraich," that is, "The Bay of the Wicker Boat": meaning the boat framed of wickerwork and covered with skins which the Britons knew as a "coracle." This vessel is supposed to have been sixty feet in length, the measurement of an ancient mound at this spot which



IONA

is said to have been raised to commemorate the landing.

St. Columba was, of course, a member of that Early British Primitive Church which dates from the Christianising of Britain in the time of the Roman occupation ; a church which, although driven out of the eastern parts of England by the invasions of pagan hordes, never became extinct in the west of England or Ireland, and is thus more ancient than the re-introduction of Christianity by Augustine, who was sent by the Pope, Gregory the Great, to re-convert Britain, in A.D. 596.

Whether Columba was, or was not, the founder of the monastic order of the Culdees has been a matter of assertion and denial ; some considering the Culdees to have been a brotherhood originating a century or so later. At any rate, the Culdees were established here until the twelfth century, when they were supplanted by Roman Catholics. The Culdees, "companions of God," had a monastic ideal not so far removed from that of the Carthusians, but perhaps even more austere and reclusive.

They believed in solitary and even isolated cells, for meditation and prayer, apart from their fellows. But Columba's was the missionary spirit, and he Christianised Scotland even to the remote Orkneys.

Columba died on Sunday, June 9th, 597, in his seventy-seventh year. He is said to have called his servant, Diarmid, to him, and to have said : "This day, in the sacred volume, is called the Sabbath. That is 'rest,' and it will indeed be a Sabbath to me, for it is to me the last day of this toilsome life ; the day on which I am to rest from all my labour and trouble ; for on this sacred night of the Lord, at the midnight hour, I go the way of my fathers."

Already, on the little hill called the "Abbot's Knoll," he had blessed this, his long-adopted home, and pronounced this prophecy of its fame: "Unto this place, albeit so small and poor, great homage shall yet be paid, not only by the kings and peoples of the Scots, but by the rulers of barbarous and distant nations, with their people also. In great veneration, too, it shall be held by the holy men of other churches."

A hundred years later, Columba's body was removed to Ireland; but all traces of it have been lost. His selection of Iona as a place of safety was in his own time justified, but in A.D. 704, according to an ancient chronicler, this and all the other islands were devastated by the northern sea-rovers.

Nothing remains in the way of buildings in Iona of a date so early as Columba's time. The earliest are the ruins of what is called the "Nunnery," which, with the ruined Cathedral, are of the thirteenth century.

You come to them past the modern Established Church and manse and "Mc Lean's Cross," one of the only two remaining on the island of the vast number of three hundred and sixty said once to have existed here. The other is St. Martin's Cross, in the enclosure of the Cathedral, "where rest from mortal coil the mighty of the Isles," among them forty-eight early Scottish kings, four Irish kings, eight Norwegian princes, and many Lords of the Isles, Bishops, Abbots and Priors; together with many Mc Leods of Mc Leod, Mackinnons, Macquarries, Macleans, and others. The last of the Scottish kings to be buried on Iona was Duncan the First; the Duncan of Shakespeare's Macbeth, who began his rule in 1034 and was murdered six years later:

Rosse : " Where is Duncan's body ? "

Macduff : " Carried to Colme's Kill,
The sacred storehouse of his
predecessors
And guardian of their bones."

St. Martin's Cross in front of the west door of the Cathedral, is known more generally, from the many reproductions of it, as the " Iona Cross." It was set up to the memory of St. Martin of Tours, whose period was the sixth century.

THE ABBEY FARM

THE "Abbey Farm," how romantic a name is that ! One feels a longing to live in an Abbey Farm, with all its centuries-old traditions, vague but the more intriguing from their very vagueness. There are many Abbey Farms, some of them the relics of Priories—but by common consent the terms "Abbey" and "Priory" are popularly interchangeable. The tendency in these latter years is for the Abbey Farm to be sold and to be reconditioned and remodelled and to become a country residence. They all are going that road, for this is the era of the appreciation of the picturesque and the romantic ; and there is scarce in these times any place so remotely situated but that modern methods of transport will serve to bring it within easy reach.

That way, about 1910, went the extremely romantic remains of Bilsington Priory, in Kent, near Aldington, by Romney Marsh. Here were the remains of the domestic buildings of an Augustine Priory, secluded amid a tangle of some 800 acres of brushwood and coppices. As I remember it, the house was occupied by an old farm-labourer and his wife, who lived in the very few remaining habitable rooms. Owls occupied the upper floors and the remains of the tower. You walked on those crazy floors at your peril. The place was doubly haunted—so it was said—by a Prior who told his beads red-hot, and by the ghost of a woman who was killed by her husband for accidentally breaking a trayful of china. Nightly crashings, as of china, were said by unveracious

witnesses to be heard—but not, certainly by the old couple who lived in this eerie place.

The Abbey Farm at Robertsbridge, near Battle, in Sussex, occupies part of the site of the Cistercian Abbey of “de Ponte Roberti,” founded in 1176 by Robert de Saint Martin. It is one of those Abbeys of which rarely we hear, but it was of importance sufficient for the Abbot in 1193 to be chosen, with the Abbot of Boxley, to travel on to the Continent to discover where it was that our King Richard Cœur de Lion was held prisoner.

Not much of the story of this Abbey has survived, but there is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford a manuscript volume inscribed “This book belongs to St. Mary of Robertsbridge: whosoever shall steal it, or sell it, or in any way alienate it from this house, let him be Anathema Maranatha.”

Notwithstanding this comprehensive curse, someone did steal it. A further inscription, written, it is thought, by John Grandison, Bishop of Exeter, 1327-1369, declares, “I, John, Bishop of Exeter, know not where the aforesaid house is, nor did I steal this book, but acquired it in a lawful way.”

The Abbey Farm occupies a portion of the domestic buildings of the monastery, and forms a picturesque group. The dairy is in a vaulted crypt. I understand that here again the property has lately been acquired and the house has become a country residence.

A yet more curious change has befallen the ruins of Burnham Abbey, south of the Bath Road, at Cippenham, near Slough. This religious house was founded for a community of Augustine nuns in 1266, when Henry the Third was King, by his younger brother, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, titular King of the

Romans, the only Englishman who ever wore the Imperial crown ; although in a strictly honorary and completely shadowy capacity. He was moved to establish Burnham Abbey by an acute access of zeal " for the salvation of his soul, and for the souls of the Kings of England, his ancestors." This Abbey of the Blessed Mary of Burnham was richly endowed, including " the whole of the land of Morfurlong and Brockfurlong, with the whole of the meadow of Dillepol " belonging to the adjacent manor of Cippenham, together with the wood " bought of John Everengee, which is called ' La Strete '." The Deed of Endowment, signed at Cippenham on April 18th in that year by the King, Prince Edward, various Bishops, Princes of the Blood Royal, and sundry local gentle folk, guaranteed to the nuns and their successors " as alms-free, absolute and in perpetuity " the property thus devised, and they were to be secured " against all men, Jews and Christians," and against all manner of State claims, " excepting the Castle-guard of Windsor, which is owed and customary."

This grant " in perpetuity " lasted in fact only for two centuries and a half, for the Abbey was dissolved in 1539, after having been visited by Henry the Eighth's Commissioners in 1535 and given a respite of four years. It was on September 19th of this year that Alice Baldwin and her nuns signed the surrender in the Chapter-House, " to whatever uses are pleasing to His Majesty." To the Abbess was granted a pension of £13 6s. 8d.; and her nuns had pensions of from £4 down to £2.

The property was granted to a family of Wentworth, and they, demolishing the church, converted the domestic buildings into a residence, of which there remained fewer evidences than of the monastery in

Recent years, when the group of buildings was a farmhouse, with the Lady Chapel and the refectory serving as cowsheds and stables, where the kine and the carts and horses sheltered ; while the farmyard was deep in mud and straw, as farmyards commonly are. The place, as I recollect it, was a delight to the artist. Morland would have made an exquisite picture of it ; and the sentimental found a kind of sweet melancholy in the thoughts of how the old order irrevocably passes, giving place to new men and serving other needs.



REMAINS OF BRADENSTOKE ABBEY

But a change came over the Abbey Farm of Burnham in 1916, when the property, having been purchased in 1914 by a Mr. Bissley, of Maidenhead, the Abbey was restored and rebuilt in the interests of Anglicans : ‘ Romanisers,’ as usually they are suspect of being. A community styling itself the ‘ Society of the Precious Blood ’ is now seated in the old home of the Augustine monks ; hoping, possibly, for what most of us hope will never again be.

High above the upper waters of the Wiltshire Avon,

between Swindon and Chippenham, in an extremely rural district, stand the few remains of Bradenstoke Priory, sometimes called 'Clack Abbey' from its neighbourhood to the hamlet of Clack. This house of Augustine Canons was founded in 1142 by Walter D'Evreux, who later entered his own religious house and became a member of that Order. It is an unusual situation, this of Bradenstoke Priory, on a hilltop, overlooking vast reaches of country. Usually we look for a monastery in a vale. The Priory, dedicated to St. Mary, was of course suppressed, in common with others, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and its lands and buildings became the property of one Richard Pexhill, who—or those who came immediately after him—destroyed the Priory Church so effectually that no trace of it is now to be found, although we know that it must have stood to the south of the guesten-hall, the one remaining portion of the domestic buildings.

The last Prior, William Snow, was not a man to try conclusions with his sovereign. He readily surrendered the establishment over which he presided; and accepted a pension of £60 a year, and later was appointed Dean of the newly-established Cathedral of Bristol.

The great upstanding guesten-hall, a fine relic with a vaulted crypt or undercroft, forms part of a farm, on a property extending to 470 acres, which was offered for sale in April 1920.

BEELEIGH ABBEY

ABOVE the little town and port of Maldon in Essex, near the river Blackwater, before it ceases to be a river and becomes a salt water estuary, stands all that is left of Beeleigh Abbey, once a house of Premonstratensian Canons, founded so far back as 1180, by one Robert Mantell, in place of an earlier establishment seated at what then was called "Parundun," now Great Parndon; where the manor of Canons by its name still bears witness to that very early history. The Premonstratensian Canons, an Order of White monks, a foundation instituted in 1120 by Norbert of Cleves, Archbishop of Magdebury, were of the Augustine monastic rule, and took their name from the place where their first community was established, at Prémontré, in the diocese of Laon.

The Abbey of Beeleigh, or of Maldon as it sometimes was styled, long prospered in this pleasant and sheltered corner of Essex, and received many benefits from pious founders: prominent among whom were Henry Bouchier, Earl of Eu in Normandy, and of Essex, Lord Treasurer of England, and his wife, Isabel Neville, sister of Richard, Duke of York, father of Edward the Fourth; both of whom were buried here, in the Abbey Church. The story of Beeleigh Abbey is a quiet and uneventful record, and its incidents in all those centuries until it was surrendered in 1540 to Henry the Eighth's Commissioners are mostly domestic. When John Copshefe, the last Abbot, with his nine Canons made the deed of surrender, the annual value

of the Abbey's income was, according to the historian, Speed, £196 6s. od., or, by Dugdale's account, £157 16s. 11¼d. If we say, roughly, that the Abbey's income was about £3,000 of our present values, we shall be probably within the mark.

The Abbey, and much of its lands, were on July 15th, 1536 granted by the King to Sir John Gate, an Essex squire, of Garnets, High Easter, a member of His Majesty's Household, and later Captain of the Guard to Edward the Sixth, vice-Chamberlain of his



BEELEIGH ABBEY

Household, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and holder of other offices. He did not, however, receive the property as a free gift, for he paid the King £300. Nor, it would appear, did he intend to do other than make a good bargain out of which he might make a profit ; for six years later, in 1546, he sold the property to one William Marche, who in his turn disposed of it to one " Thomas Franke the younger," November 19th, 1547. These transactions in real estate, no doubt at an ever-increasing price, have quite a modern ring about them.

Nothing whatever is left of the Abbey Church ; and we do not know which it was of these owners who destroyed it. But it would seem that it was Franke



THE CHAPTER HOUSE, BEELEIGH ABBEY,
NOW A DINING ROOM

who adapted what is left of the domestic buildings and added to them, to form the present Abbey house.

As to Sir John Gate, he came to a bad end, for he was beheaded on Tower Hill, August 22nd, 1553, for

an act of High Treason—that of espousing the cause of the Lady Jane Grey. There were those who declared that Gate suffered thus because he had sacrilegiously acquired lands once belonging to the Church ; but no such tragic story appears to have been recorded of later owners. What became of the vast amount of building material that must have resulted from the destruction of the Abbey ? That is something of a mystery, for although stones that obviously once belonged to it are still visibly built into neighbouring houses, yet these do not account for much. Of the tombs of the great and wealthy benefactors known to have been here, nothing is left save some fragments thought to have been that of Henry Bourchier and his wife. Of the stained and painted glass that once decorated the Abbey only six fragments are now known to exist. They were removed many years ago from, it is thought, the Chapter House, and are now in a staircase window at Maldon Hall, amidst some modern painted glass. They represent Saints : among them Saints Augustine, John the Evangelist, John the Baptist, and Mary. The monks' cemetery was situated where the lower garden of the Abbey House is now to be found.

For very many years Beeleigh Abbey was just a picturesque farmhouse, but of late it has been purchased and restored as a country residence, without in any way detracting from its antique charm. Indeed, in the care now taken of it, the thirteenth and fourteenth century remains of the Chapter House, the Dormitory and the Refectory, with their slender pillars of Purbeck marble are more attractive than when left to moulder away in damp and neglect. The original Chapter House has now become a dining room, and the monks' Dormitory is a library.

A mile north of Yeovil is Preston Plucknett, where the Abbey Farm, standing in a picturesque grouping with a vast tithe-barn, is a reminiscence of those remote times when the land here was one of the properties of Bermondsey Abbey ; when a portion of this village of Preston Plucknett was indeed known as " Preston Bermondsey." The name " Plucknett " is, by the way, a debased form of the name of the Plug-enets, the ancient manorial lords. The Abbey Farm, once the manor-house, is a noble relic of mediæval times, dating from the fourteenth century. The lofty chimney-like structure seen in the illustration cresting



THE ABBEY FARM, PRESTON PLUCKNETT

the roofs of the house was originally the louvre of the great hall, in those times before fireplaces and flues in the walls, when the fires were lighted on a hearth in the centre of the hall and the smoke ascended to the roof, and so out at the louvre.

Near by Preston Plucknett is Montacute, that romantic place of the lofty hill starting so suddenly up from the plain, where there is not only a great ancient mansion built by Sir Edward Phelips in the years between 1580 and 1601, but also the Priory Farm, a relic of the Cluniac Priory founded here in 1091 by Robert, Earl of Mortaigne, one of those who came over

with William the Conqueror. The last Prior of Montacute, Robert Shirbone, surrendered his Priory peaceably in 1539, to the King's Commissioner, Petre, who was granted the property and made a good thing out of the affair by selling to one Robert Freke. He made a re-sale to one of the Phelips family. Of the Priory Church nothing is left, and the remains of the domestic buildings constitute to-day the Priory Farm. This consists chiefly of the gatehouse, a work of the fifteenth century ; a very ornate and beautiful building.



THE ABBEY FARM, MONTACUTE

Somerset was indeed a wonderful region for religious houses. Away in this remote part of Sedgemoor there stood the Benedictine Abbey of Muchelney, dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul, founded, according to the monks, by King Ina of the West Saxons ; or, by other accounts by King Athelstan, who is said to have originated it by way of a thanksgiving for his victory of Brunanburgh, A.D. 937. There is so little story to the long years of Muchelney Abbey's existence that no outstanding incident is left to tell. The establishment

ended on January 3rd, 1538, when Thomas Legh, one of the King's Commissioners, wrote that the Abbot was negligent, and of a character ill-befitting his office ; and the ten brethren, he declared, were " all ignorant and unlearned ; and in the manor no servautes maynteyned or hospitalite kept." To the Earl of Hertford fell the spoils of Muchelney. The Abbey Church soon was destroyed, but the Abbot's House remains. It is now the highly-picturesque Abbey Farm. Evidently the Abbey, obscure though its story be, was no impoverished establishment, for the farmhouse



MUCHELNEY ABBEY FARM

shows us that the Abbot, whose home it was, lived splendidly, in a mansion rebuilt in the fifteenth century with all the glories of the later Gothic style of architecture to dignify him.

The Priest's House at Muchelney is itself no mean dwelling, although small in size. It is a building of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries ; and still retains a beautiful Gothic window of four lights ; among its interesting features. A thatched roof gives it an unusually piquant and rustic effect, in contrast with this elaborate architectural quality. After the

Reformation, this priest's house long was used as the vicarage, but it has for many years ceased to be such. It owes its preservation chiefly to the fact that although the living is held in conjunction with that of the adjoining parish of Huish Episcopi, and although the vicar resides in that village, the old priest's house had long been used for the use of the curate. Latterly in order to preserve this curious old relic from any chance of alteration that might impair its archæological interest, it has been acquired by the National Trust. The sum paid for it was £200, an amount that is no criterion of



THE PRIEST'S HOUSE, MUCHELNEY

its value, had the purchase been made for private and individual reasons. A curious document, dating from December 1308, has been preserved, bearing upon the maintenance of the old-time occupants of the house : " Ordinance by Walter, Bishop of Bath and Wells, that Sir Richard Baldewyne of Mertoock (Martock) Vicar of the parish church of Muchelnye, and his successors the vicars have the whole manse, house and curtilage, in which manse he now lives, and shall duly receive from the cellarer of the convent a monk's bread of the weight of sixty shillings, and two gallons of ale of the best conventual ale, and from the kitchen a dish of

fresh meat on Sundays and on Tuesdays, and one dish of eggs or fish on the other days of the week, at the cook's pleasure, or from the sacristan £4 yearly, in support of the charges ; also all the money offered on Sundays at Muchelnye and in the chapel of Draytone thereto annexed, also all money offered at burials."

From the foregoing it is evident that the priest's house of Muchelney owes its quality, unusual in the home of a mere secular priest of those times, to some intimate connection with the Abbey.



REMAINS OF ULVERSCROFT PRIORY

But, the Abbot's House—or, more in the language of those times ; the Abbot's " Lodging "—that survived far more often than the Abbey Church ; for the very excellent reason that, as my Lord Abbot, or the less important and unmitred abbots, and even the priors, were commonly housed sumptuously, their houses, or " lodgings " were eminently desirable residences for those secular persons who acquired those properties at the Dissolution. Of what use was your Abbey Church, or the refectory of the monks, or the cloisters when once the establishment was dispersed ? Of no

use whatever : and so the stones of them were all too often dispersed. But the old homes of the abbots and the priors often were fully up to the ideals of comfort entertained in those times. The monks themselves, although technically vowed to poverty, lived in a standard of comfort well beyond the middle class ideals of those ages. When folk dwelt in timber and lath and plaster dwellings, they resided in stone-built monasteries, in which there were the lay-brothers and others, to perform most, if not all, of the menial duties ; and their Abbot or Prior was a great gentleman ; ranking with the nobles of the outside world ; and a great deal more educated and refined than they.

There are, in the Charnwood Forest regions of Leicestershire, the poor remains of Ulverscroft Priory, near Bardon Hill. It was an Augustine monastery, founded by Robert Bossu, Earl of Leicester, about 1135. To this foundation was in 1465 added Charley Priory which had been founded by Blanchmains ; his son. The tower of Ulverscroft stands yet, and part of the cloister is a farmyard, while the Prior's Lodging is a farmhouse.

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